African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project

Consolidated Report

Reports prepared for the African Canadian Services Division, Department of Education

Report 1: Education and Training Needs of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia
(Prepared by BarJun Consultants)

Report 2: African Canadian Immigrants Employment Research
(Prepared by Engineering Systems Research Inc.)

Report 3: Bridging the Divide—The Cultural Experiences of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia
(Prepared by The Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures, Nova Scotia)

Report 4: Service Delivery for African Immigrants
(Prepared by Winnie Mabaleka and Michelle Thomason)

NOVA SCOTIA
Department of Education
African Canadian Services

Please Note

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All possible attempts have been made to identify and acknowledge information from external sources. In the event that a source should be further identified or acknowledged, please contact African Canadian Services, Nova Scotia Department of Education.

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African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project

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Introduction

The African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project was sponsored by the African Canadian Services Division (ACSD), Nova Scotia Department of Education and funded by the Provincial Immigration Committee. Like the rest of Canada, Nova Scotia is becoming increasingly diverse with each new wave of immigrants. Through the policy of multiculturalism, Canada embraces diversity. However, many African immigrants in Nova Scotia, and indeed across Canada, feel that while politicians and employers publicly talk about lack of skilled workers, their skills and education are discounted. They are often the last to be hired, and often are not offered the opportunity to practise or work in their area of training and expertise. In desperation many have accepted jobs well below their qualifications.

To promote the full participation of African Canadian immigrants in Canadian society, the African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project (ACIARP) sought to complete a needs assessment and propose solutions to meet the education and human resources development needs of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia. The project brought together African Canadian immigrants of diverse backgrounds (the African continent, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and United States of America) to share their experiences, foster social cohesion, and identify strategies for greater participation in the social, cultural, economic and political life of Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia, like the rest of Canada, faces a serious problem of an aging population and economy that is increasingly dependent on a highly educated and skilled workforce. In an effort to meet the labour demands of the economy, Nova Scotia will, in the future, depend on immigration of educated and skilled immigrants. However, in attracting skilled immigrants, Canada faces two major challenges: first, ensuring that they go to the areas of greatest need; and second, facilitating full integration into the Canadian society for the full benefit of the immigrants and Canadian society.

Immigrants arrive in Canada with high expectations and limited knowledge of the Canadian labour market operations. Consequently, attracting, keeping, and effectively integrating skilled immigrants into the Nova Scotia economy has become an important policy issue for both government and the private sector. In this context, the African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project is not only relevant, but very timely.

Using both the qualitative and quantitative methods of research, the study documents the experiences and challenges in accessing public services (education and training, legal and social services), and employment opportunities. It also examines the challenges of culture retention and passing on African culture-based values to the Canadian-born children.

The objectives and scope of the project were to

- identify and document the education and training needs of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia, and how those needs can be met
- identify and document the needs and challenges facing African Canadian immigrants in retaining and promoting their cultural identity, as well as the issue of "cultural conflict" between immigrant parents and their children

- assess the impact of culture and cultural identity on one's ability to integrate in a new society, and how this fits with Canada's policy of multiculturalism
- share experiences and information, and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia and strategies for change

The study identifies and makes recommendations for the removal of systemic or institutional barriers that hinder African Canadian immigrants from full participation in Canadian society, and therefore limit their contribution to Nova Scotia and Canada. It also suggests the necessary institutional and program changes framed by a positive vision about integration of African immigrants. The report proposes that each department must reassess its distinctive role and how it is delivering services to immigrants.

Clearly, co-operation and co-ordination among departments and agencies hold the key to Nova Scotia's ability to attract, retain, celebrate, and integrate new immigrants. The benefits to our economy and society are not debatable. The issue is whether we can view immigrants as a resource to be nurtured and maintained. Some investment in policy review and improved services is required.

The report consists of six sections: Terms of Reference, an Executive Summary and four specific issue papers. The executive summary outlines the genesis, the rationale, and the organizational structure of the project. It gives a brief summary of each of the research papers produced and the key recommendations.

The study was overseen by a Steering Committee composed of members from the African Canadian immigrant community. The research was conducted by teams of consultants hired by the ACSD in consultation with the Steering Committee. Each of the consultant teams performed literature reviews, held information sessions, focus groups, personal interviews, and sent out extensive questionnaires and then held community consultations. After collecting, correlating and analysing the data, the consultants presented their findings to the Steering Committee and to the community members for review and validation. The Steering Committee, with support from the African Canadian Services Division, was responsible for facilitating the work over a three year period.

The Steering Committee was also to

- ensure that the research process would create a sense of community
- promote community interest to come together and celebrate their individual differences
- hold periodic information sessions to keep the community involved in the process

One of the recommendations is to consult with the Interdepartmental Immigration Committee to review the recommendations of the report, and develop a work plan to implement the key recommendations of the report. The work plan will include activities related to information sharing, and increased knowledge of member departments on immigrant settlement and integration issues. It is hoped that this increased knowledge and awareness will spur the departments and other stakeholders to implement program reviews and changes. The desired outcome is a more effective system of immigrant settlement and integration that would make Nova Scotia a more attractive place for immigrants to stay.

Acknowledgments

The funding for the research was provided by Immigration Canada through the Provincial Immigration Committee. The Steering Committee wishes to express its gratitude for this support.

The Steering Committee members:

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Terms of Reference

September 10, 1998

Definitions

For the purposes of this report, the following terms are defined:

African Canadian Immigrant

A resident of Canada and of African ancestry from Africa, South America, Caribbean, etc.

African Nova Scotian Immigrant

A resident of Nova Scotia and of African ancestry from Africa, South America, Caribbean, etc.

ACSD

African Canadian Services Division

HRDC

Human Resource Development, formerly EIC; formerly Human Resource Labour Canada

ACIARP

African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project

Record of Decisions

The recorded decisions of the African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project

Partnership

Joint interest, ACSD or groups

Provincial in Scope

Have a positive impact on all African Canadian residents

Mission Statement

The African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project (ACIARP) respects and represents the education, social, employment, training and economic development needs of all African Canadian Immigrants (ACI). ACIARP is charged with the responsibility of conducting a needs assessment and proposing solutions in meeting those identified needs, ultimately enabling all African Canadian immigrants to be successfully integrated into Nova Scotian society.

History

There needs to be a clarification both throughout the terms of reference and in the job description to clearly delineate that we are specifically addressing immigrants of African descent or ancestry because of their unique and specific issues.

Introduction

Like the rest of Canada, Nova Scotia is becoming increasingly diverse with each new wave of immigrants. This same trend applies to the African Canadian community as well. Within the African Canadian community, there is the "indigenous" African Canadian community, as well as the immigrants from the African continent, South America, the Caribbean, and the United States.

Although all members share the same African heritage, they have different backgrounds, values, languages, religious and political beliefs, etc. In fact the African Canadian community in Nova Scotia consists of a complex network of subcultures. A lack of interaction among these subcultures has sometimes resulted in misunderstandings, prejudices, and even hostility. All this is affecting the effective functioning and healthy growth of the African Canadian community.

So far, few attempts have been made to bring together African Canadians of different backgrounds to discuss their experiences, differences, and mutual concerns. In order to achieve harmonious community relations, it is essential that some forms of dialogue and co-operation begin to take place. The fostering of mutual respect for differences and unity in diversity is essential to the internal development of the community and the integration of community members into mainstream Canadian society.

It is hoped that this project (through participatory action research) to identify and recommend solutions for the needs of African Canadian immigrants will be the beginning of a broad discussion, long overdue, of our common future.

Project Objectives

- to share experiences, and information, and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing African Canadian immigrants in NS and strategies for change
- identify and make recommendations for the removal of barriers that limit African Canadian Immigrants from participating fully and equally in Canadian society
- develop an accurate socio-demographic profile of African Canadian immigrants for the effective use of the province's African Canadian human resources
- communicate the concerns (research findings) of African Canadian immigrants to the Canadian public, governments, service delivery agencies, and other institutions to inform their decision-making and practices

Mandate

The mandate of the African Canadian Immigrant Project is as follows:

- identify and document the needs of all African Immigrant people in Nova Scotia
- recommend adjustment to labour market policies for the development of a highly trained African Nova Scotian immigrant labour force in Nova Scotia
- advise and recommend changes in the existing labor market programs and services to ensure equitable access for African Canadian immigrants
- identify and develop linkages with federal, provincial, and municipal governments and the private sector in Nova Scotia to ensure that immigrants of African ancestry are involved in the decision making process that will benefit all Nova Scotians

Roles and Responsibilities

The Steering Committee of the African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project in partnership with ACSD is responsible for the overall management of the Project. Specifically the Steering Committee will be responsible for but not limited to

- initiating advocacy for more accessible training activities that are better suited to meet the needs of African Canadian Immigrants, as well as for the equitable employment and increased participation in Nova Scotia's labour force, being an advocate for better educational opportunities for African Canadian immigrants
- establishing guidelines and procedures for the efficient implementation of the ACIARP in Nova Scotia
- reviewing budget allocations on an annual basis
- developing an annual operational plan
- appointing any standing committee that it deems necessary
- initiating any research activities that may be undertaken to address issues that arise during the activities of the ACIARP
- reviewing and establishing links with other African Canadian projects or groups of regional/provincial significance from African Canadian immigrants' proponents and/or initiating projects of regional/provincial importance that will assist in the development of African Canadian immigrants
- approving funds for the hiring of the Project's support staff
- producing quarterly reports on the activities of the Immigrant Action Research Project
- ensuring that Project Steering Committee members receive the training necessary for the proper functioning of the African Nova Scotia Immigrant Project

Executive Summary

Section 2

Introduction

Genesis

This project came into existence in 1999 to examine the needs of African Canadian immigrants in the areas of education, social development, training and economic development and to propose solutions to the needs identified with a view to enable such immigrants to integrate successfully in Nova Scotian and Canadian society, economy and labour market.

The project recognized that, while the African Canadian community as a whole shared a common African heritage, there were important differences between communities of long historical vintage and immigrants of relatively recent times from Africa, South America, the Caribbean and the United States.

The initial objectives of the project were to share experiences and information; to identify barriers to full participation and to make recommendations for their removal; to develop accurate demographic profiles of the African immigrant community; and, finally, to communicate the research findings to the Canadian public, service delivery agencies, all levels of government, and relevant institutions, to inform their decision making and practices.

Organizational Structure

A Steering Committee, comprising ten members, whose chairperson was chosen by the African Canadian Services Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, has overall responsibility for the conduct and operations of the project. The African Canadian Services Division has two representatives on the Steering Committee without voting privileges.

Initial Research Reports Produced

The Steering Committee commissioned and received the following research reports:

- Bridging the Divide: The Cultural Experiences of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia (undertaken by The Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures, Nova Scotia, with Pat Thompson, BEd and Mansoor Wani, MBA, as principal researchers, June 2001)
- African Canadian Immigrant Employment Research (undertaken by Engineering Systems Research Inc., ESRI, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, 1999)
- Report on Service Delivery for African Immigrants (undertaken by Winnie Mabaleka and Michelle Thomason, November 5, 1999)
- The Education and Training Needs of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia (undertaken by BarJun Consultants, 2001)

The main findings, key recommendations, and framework for the next phase of ACIARP, arising from each of the four reports received, appear in Section 2 of the Executive Summary.

Summary of Commissioned Reports

Report 1: The Education and Training Needs of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia

Key Findings

While this investigation was charged with examining four objectives related to education and culture, it concentrated on two principal ones, which covered the essential ground in their scope:

- to identify and document the education and training needs of African immigrants in Nova Scotia, how these needs could be met, and how the public school system can best serve them
- to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing African immigrants and strategies for change in the context of sharing experiences and information

In its introductory observations, the report acknowledged three crucial points:

- The first major wave of African immigrants arrived in Nova Scotia in the sixties and early seventies. Many were university students from various countries. After graduation a number remained in Nova Scotia where they obtained positions in various professions.
- The next wave arrived at different times in the last fifteen years (i.e., since approximately the mid-eighties) as professionals, students and refugees.

With respect to the second wave of immigrants, the main focus of the investigation, the following conclusions emerged:

- The overall experience of settling in was favourable.
- The cost of post-secondary education and the fact that foreign diplomas and degrees were not respected became problem areas.
- Finding employment after retraining and upgrading was difficult.
- The majority felt that their children had been appropriately placed in the school system and did not need additional scholastic assistance in school.
- Cultural differences, real or perceived, in classroom situations resulted in difficulties which were expressed by respondents. One of these was low teacher expectation of immigrant children.
- Most respondents agreed that the educational system is good, accessible, varied, encouraging and builds independent thought.
- The majority of respondents acknowledged the need for more role models, sensitivity training, a change in the curriculum and opportunities to work with the teachers.
- University students found more support mechanisms than parents found in the school system.
- The report noted the urgent need to build a better co-operative and cordial relationship between

African immigrants and African Nova Scotians of historical vintage on similarities and differences.

- The singular obstacle to the realization of the dreams of African immigrants settled in Nova Scotia and striving for a better life is the shortage of gainful employment.

Key Recommendations

- The Steering Committee should mobilize the organizations in the African immigrant community to use the four reports prepared to develop a position paper for the province of Nova Scotia, the Department of Education, the Nova Scotia Teacher's Union, the Nova Scotia School Board Association, the Advisory Board of Community Colleges and Universities, the Maritime Council of University Presidents, political parties and politicians, for a timely response to the concerns of African immigrants.
- The African immigrant community should work collaboratively with the African Nova Scotian community to co-host a symposium for all peoples of African descent within the next twelve months to share commonalities and diversities.
- The African immigrant community should become actively involved in the establishment of the Africentric Learning Institute as a center of excellence with an Africentric approach to education.
- The African immigrant community should pursue, as African Canadians, the potential of employment with the Public Service Commission of Canada, the Civil Service Commission of Nova Scotia, and the regional municipalities in their fields of competence and expertise in areas where qualified persons are needed.
- The African immigrant community should forge links and working relationships with the established organizations and structures serving African Canadians, such as the Regional Educators program, Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Rights unit, Student Support Workers, African Nova Scotian School Board Representatives, African Canadian Services Division, Council on African Canadian Education, Africentric Learning Institute, Black Cultural Centre, the Black Educators Association and other localized organizations.

Framework for Next Phase

- Steering Committee will consider the feasibility, content and preparation for the position paper recommended.
- The Steering Committee will consider convening a meeting of African immigrant organizations to consider the proposal to co-host a symposium.
- The Steering Committee will give thought to opening talks with selected organizations of the African Nova Scotian community to share elements of the four reports in areas of mutual and collaborative interests.

Report 2: African Canadian Immigrant Employment Research

Key Findings

Literacy

This immigrant community is highly literate, with over 80.2 per cent adult males educated beyond high school, and over 33 per cent of adult females educated beyond high school. The median for both sexes is an undergraduate degree.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate among males is 21 per cent and among females 25.8 per cent. Both rates are higher than national and provincial levels.

Small Business Experience

African Canadian immigrants operating small businesses experience unfair discrimination from financial institutions, government departments, and agencies responsible for small business supports and assistance.

Demographic Effect

- Between 1991 and 1996 the population of Nova Scotia increased by 9,340 or 1.04%. During the same period the population of African Canadian immigrants settling in Nova Scotia increased by 415 or 4.44 per cent (90 per cent residing in Halifax Regional Municipality and 10 per cent throughout the province).
- Although this community contributed significantly to the population changes recorded for Nova Scotia between 1981 to 1996, they failed to benefit from the labour market dynamics that are propelled by demographics.

Labour Market Obstacles

Five elements are identified as limiting the fair participation of this community in the Nova Scotia labour market. They are the following:

- Lack of previous job experience
- Limited networking
- Different cultural values
- Obstacles to communication
- Lack of local professional accreditation

Key Recommendations

- The African Canadian immigrant community needs to establish an organization or agency that will advocate on their behalf to overcome some of the barriers and myths that have been instrumental in denying their continuous access to employment.

- This community needs to do more internal and external networking through community umbrella-type organizations that would be charged to provide briefing and settlement services, employment referral services, and other job search services.
- The establishment of a Community Business Resource Centre that will incorporate business education and training should be considered in conjunction with the two previous recommendations.

Framework for the Next Phase

Having acquainted itself thoroughly with the Report, the Key Findings and the Key Recommendations, the Steering Committee should deliberate on the nature, structure and designation of the organization, agency or centre that could be entrusted with the task of implementing the findings and recommendations in the letter and spirit of the General Recommendation in Report 2 that the organization selected or created would carry out programs that would include the following:

- internal and external networking
- new immigrants briefing and settlement
- employment programs
- public service orientation program
- competitive public service entry test training
- interview preparation workshop
- self-employment program
- pre-employment program
- entrepreneurial program
- other resource development programs

Report 3: Bridging the Divide— The Cultural Experiences of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia

Main Findings

- While Nova Scotia has been home to people of African descent for over two hundred years, the project looked at immigrants of African descent who have made their home in Nova Scotia since 1961.
- The 1996 census gives figures of the Canadian immigrant population by place of birth and period of immigration (before 1961; 1961-1970; 1971-1980; 1981-1990; and 1991-1996) but the figures do not give an exclusive count for those of African ancestry.

  Figures show that the number of immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, and South America has increased over the last few decades.

Immigration from Africa formed 8 per cent of the immigration population for the year 2000. Most of the recent immigrant population from Africa to Nova Scotia settled in Halifax. However, the point must be emphasized that it is not possible at this stage to identify the size of the African Canadian immigrant population in Nova Scotia (or elsewhere in Canada).

- Drawing upon a scientific analysis of date (by Geert Hofstede in 1980) from 116,000 employees from over 40 countries, differences among cultures were explained on four points:
  - Individualism versus Collectivism: This refers to the dichotomy between "I" and "We," between the self and the group etc. The study shows that Canada falls within the former and most of Africa in the latter.
  - Power Distance: This refers to the notion of power relationships. Individuals in cultures with low power distance do not consider superiors to be very different from themselves (Canada). Individuals in cultures with high power distance show greater deference towards those in authority and accept that others have power over them. Other patterns and expectations arise from this cultural belief prevalent among most African immigrants and cultures.
  - The Aspect of Uncertainty and Ambiguity: Some cultures have a greater acceptance of uncertainty and ambiguity in their practices (and thus have less need for rules and absolute truths, such as in African cultures) while others (such as in Canada) have a low acceptance of uncertainty and ambiguity. Members of such cultures seek rules and absolute truths and are not very tolerant of ideas and behaviours different from the norm.
  - Masculinity versus Femininity: The first connotes power and everything associated with it (materialism, power, assertiveness, competition, performance, personal ambition, independence, and work). The second places the highest value on people (service to others, interdependence between people, responsibility to others, quality of social life, sex roles less distinct, and stress levels are lower). Canada, East Africa, and West Africa fall in the middle third category in this section and thus there are greater similarities.
- These four points above come into prominence when cultures meet and when cultures interact. People usually think, feel, and act as they do because they were brought up in a culture in which these ways were accepted, not only as good and right but as natural. The challenge arises when people from one culture migrate to another culture, when suddenly the norms of behaviour accepted in one culture are questioned in another.
- These four points also interplay when members from different cultures use different communication styles. The words used and the way they are put together tell much about different cultures. Culture is thus a mediator, interpreter, and source of meanings. Cross-cultural communication is more difficult than communication among people of the same culture. It is also difficult to express one language's precise meaning in another language. Someone speaking a second language may find communication more complex.

- Comparison of verbal communication styles between usages in Canada and most African nations show the following differences:

  Direct (where message is more explicit); **Indirect** (where message is more implicit)

  Exacting (where quantity of talk is moderate); **Elaborate** (where quantity of talk is excessive)

  Personal (where focus is on the speaker and use of first name is common); **Contextual** (where focus is on role of speaker in a hierarchical relationship)

  Instrumental (where language is goal-oriented and sender-focussed); **Affective** (where language is process-oriented and receiver-focussed)
- Consequences of cultural differences experienced by recent immigrants of African origin, embodied in the common term "culture shock," derive from the absence of prior preparation or information on how to cope with differences through a lack of sensitization in the areas of cultural awareness, cross-cultural communication differences, and prior suggestions to newcomers.
- On the issue of how to adjust to a new culture (what degree to accept, reject, compromise with, blend into) four principal aspects emerge: how to retain the "home" culture, what programs and services are necessary, how to cope with systemic discrimination, and what to make of the negative portrayal of Africa and persons of African origin by the host media. All respondents felt strongly about the aspects.
- Finally, three vital aspects are noted in the cultural experiences of immigrants of African origins in their interaction with the host communities and with members of their families of a younger generation. These are found in the new parent-child relationships coming to grips with the myths, realities, and messages of Canadian multiculturalism, and with the vital role of education for a better understanding of cultural nuances in order to minimize cultural conflicts.

Key Recommendations in Report

- In the area of programs and services, the government should make provision for a community organization whose sole purpose would be to service the needs of African Canadian immigrants. This is also achievable through funding existing organizations to design programs and services for such immigrants. The input and co-operation of African Canadian immigrants are vital elements.
- In the area of formal school education, African history and cross-cultural understanding should be a mandated one credit course for all students; the celebration of cultural diversity (Multicultural Heritage Day, Black History Month, etc.) should be spread throughout the year; teacher training courses should incorporate material on multiculturalism and anti-racism.
- In the area of public and community education, information on Africa should be sponsored and delivered, while information on multiculturalism, employment equity, and human rights should be readily available to all government agencies in the form of reports and brochures.

Government is respectfully called upon to give consideration and approval for the following:

- funding for educational and social programs that will tie African Canadian immigrant children to their heritage

- putting in place as well as publicizing programs to acquaint new immigrants on life in Nova Scotia and how to integrate into society
- providing practical information in packages to immigrants, either before or upon arrival in Nova Scotia
- informing itself to recognize differences and similarities among the various African cultures through involving African immigrants in decision making in committees and boards
- providing incentives and encouragement to the media to portray Africa and African Canadian immigrants in a positive light
- recognizing foreign credentials and education and work experience to give immigrants a reasonable entry point to Canadian opportunities

Framework for Next Phase

- Steering Committee will acquaint itself throughly with the substance and thrust of this report.
- Steering Committee will share the contents of this report with kindred organizations, selected government agencies and officials, with a view to identifying priorities realistically.
- Steering Committee will seek the services of a coordinator for cultural services who should be entrusted to liaise with existing educational institutions to provide, or advise on, the delivery of the various educational requirements and needs identified in the main findings and key recommendations sections of this report.

Report 4: Report on Service Delivery for African Immigrants

Key Findings

- A number of studies over the past years have confirmed that immigrants are not a burden on the social welfare system or the economy at large, that compared to non-immigrants of the same age they are less dependent on welfare and other social assistance.
- Four models of service deliveries have been identified in recent studies:
  - by mainstream service organizations (these may lack historical and cultural sensitivities and appropriate language skills)
  - ethnic organizations for own communities (these are handicapped by under-funding and lack of professional staff)
  - multicultural services (based on a faulty assumption that groups are cohesive and not taking into account differences that may exist among members of any group)
  - bridging services approach (based on connections forged between mainstream agencies and cultural communities founded on excellent cross-cultural sensitization)
- There were three different sets of responses to the issue of integration:
  - possible if the greater population puts in a greater effort

  - impossible and/or unwanted
  - philosophical acceptance of an in-between position
- African immigrants confirmed the existence of discrimination and racism and cited numerous examples, acknowledging that, while there were no obvious or easy solutions, education must continue to provide the tools to fight injustices.
- The important service delivery areas identified and analysed were as follows:
  - Language and accents (lack of English language is a limiting option for advancement; improvement of communication skills is a shared responsibility; the issue of accents continues to be controversial and divisive).
  - Health care (the majority are well informed on the existing system and their rights as patients; the main issue for the majority was the inappropriateness of health care services due to communication or cultural barriers)
  - Housing (a large proportion of African immigrants have utilized government-sponsored housing at some point in time in Nova Scotia; very few have used co-operative housing; most agree on the need for better information and more outreach work by service providers).
  - Settlement services (the majority of African immigrants placed a heavy reliance on universities, African associations and churches).
  - Credit and banking (not identified as a serious problem area).
  - Community services (a significant number have accessed programs provided by the Department of Community Services such as employment insurance child-care subsidies and social assistance/welfare; there is a lack of representation of African immigrants in day care centres and schools, the singular exception being "The Africa School," funded by the African Canadian Services Division of the Department of Education and Culture and run by the African Canadian Women's Association).
  - Legal aid services (a general lack of knowledge in this area).

Key Recommendations

- Provision as well as reinforcement of race and culture sensitivity training on issues of racism and discrimination to service delivery individuals and agencies.
- African immigrants themselves should be engaged to implement sensitization programs and to serve on service agency boards.
- Regular community workshops should be conducted to provide opportunities for knowledge and information sharing among service providers and users.
- The establishment of an African Immigrant Resource Centre would, in addition to other activities, provide a central meeting place for the over 16 African Associations in Nova Scotia.
- All levels of government should design and implement a comprehensive program to heighten awareness of the necessity to combat prejudice within all communities.
- The Department of Citizenship and Immigration has a vital role to play in ensuring the

successful outcome of the various recommendations in this report through more flexible funding programs and by involving African immigrants to improve existing programs as well as contribute to ongoing program development.

- The provision of scholarships and grants to pursue higher education will lead to more participation by African immigrants in areas of social work, child care, health (including mental health) and education.

Framework for Next Phase

- Steering Committee should acquaint itself with the contents of this report and set up a subcommittee to select areas for action in priority order.
- Besides the key recommendations, the report contains suggestions for future action while awaiting the outcome of recommendations made, such as pursuing the matter of ESL training with institutions where it is offered and seeking information and education on housing services.

Section 3

Report 1:
Education and Training Needs of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia

Prepared for
The African Canadian Immigrant Research Project
African Canadian Services Division
Nova Scotia Department of Education
June 26, 2001
Prepared by BarJun Consultants

Foreword

The African Canadian Services Division and the African Canadian Immigrant Research Project should be commended for designing an initiative that will identify the needs and barriers facing African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia.

This portion of the total research proposal was completed by BarJun Consultants with a focus on the education and training needs of African Canadian immigrants. A special thanks is extended to all individuals who participated in this research project. Questionnaires were distributed to African Canadians throughout the province. Focus groups included participants from the Caribbean, South America, Bermuda, the United States and the Continent of Africa, more specifically, Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts, Antigua, Egypt, Granada, Trinidad, Sierra Leone, Barbados, Somalia, Ethiopia, Congo Zaire, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, South Africa, Guinea, Sudan, Eritrea and Angola.

Two consulting firms, BarJun Consultants and the Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures, communicated frequently on the process and results from questionnaires. An analysis was completed from the analysis section that was provided by participants in the project. The consultants also listed conclusions and directions for members of the African Canadian New Immigrants Committee to consider. Recommendations will be provided for the research pilot team to use as they develop strategies. Special acknowledgement is given to Pachai Consultancy Services, GodSun & Associates Consulting and Caldwell Consultants for their contribution to various aspects of the report.

The Black Learners Advisory Committee Report (BLAC), Volume 3 and its 46 recommendations are used extensively as a resource document in this project. Volume 3 details the plight of education for African Nova Scotian and African Canadian learners.

Introduction

African peoples have been inhabitants of the Province of Nova Scotia since 1607 when Mathieu De Costa, a Black Portuguese interpreter, arrived with Samuel de Champlain. Since that time, black people demonstrated their survival skills by persevering on rock filled land far from the civilization of towns and large villages. These traits remained with African people even after they were stolen from Mother Africa during the slave trade in the 1400s, 1500s, and 1600s.

By focusing on the education and culture of African Canadian new immigrants, this research project dealt with the challenges of living in another country away from their homeland, as well as finding ways and means of reaching out to brothers and sisters who have lived in a system that has denied them full participation in Canadian society. This research project looked at African Canadians who have come to Canada and Nova Scotia since the 1960s. At the time, the influx of African Canadian students was an inspiration to local Black students and members of the community. There was a sharing of culture, traditions and customs. Many remained in the province and have chosen to raise their families here.

This report will attempt to make a comparison between the education of their children in the public school system in the province with those persons who have arrived in Nova Scotia. Attention was also given in the focus group sessions to the educational experiences of students of families who have been in Nova Scotia for over 300 years.

Background

There are several hundred African Canadian immigrants who are now citizens of Canada and living in Nova Scotia. Over the last 40 years, there have been two major waves of New African Canadians from the continent of Africa, the Caribbean, South America, Central America and the United States. The first occurred in the sixties and early seventies. Many were university students from various countries. After graduation a number remained in Nova Scotia and obtained positions in various professions.

The second group of immigrants seeking citizenship status arrived during the last 2–5 years and as far back as approximately 10–15 years. Some came as students seeking post-secondary and graduate programs while others came with qualifications to secure employment in various professional fields. As well, some arrived in Nova Scotia as refugees and after a long wait, they finally were able to contribute to society in their new home country.

It was over a period of hundreds of years still being practised in the British Commonwealth. Nonetheless, they were allocated plots of land throughout the province. Most plots were on rough terrain and unsuitable for farming. Regardless of the time and circumstances of their arrival, Black African people are recognizable as immigrant persons from non-European countries. It should be that people with African roots came to Canada, and in particular, Nova Scotia. Some came from the United States in 1782. When they arrived, slavery was acknowledged, however, that those whose descendants came here over three hundred years ago had to endure trials and tribulations in a segregated racist state for the most part. This daily exposure has taken a toll on the self-esteem and confidence of local Black individuals. Unfortunately, African Nova Scotians have not seen a significant number of persons in the fields of medicine, law, politics, science, and other specialized professions.

Now African Canadians bring life experiences that the local Black community have never experienced. One possible outcome of this research project could be a closer, more open relationship between those who have been here for a long time and those who have arrived here in the last 40 years.

Methodology

A great deal of information was collected and analysed through focus group sessions and questionnaires completed by African Canadians. The outcome of this analysis will result in recommendations to remove those barriers that hinder African Canadians immigrants from participating fully in Canadian society. It is also intended to bring together African Canadian immigrants of diverse backgrounds to share experiences and ideas, foster social cohesion and identify strategies for greater participation by African Canadians in the social, cultural and political life of Nova Scotia.

Data Collection

The two consulting firms that focussed on education and culture jointly developed a questionnaire.

This questionnaire was mailed to approximately 400 African Canadian immigrants. The database was determined from a province-wide list that came from the African Canadian Services Division. Additional names were obtained from other sources in the community.

Data Management

Each participant receiving the questionnaire was contacted by the consultant's office before it was mailed out. Confirmation was given in regard to their participation in the research product.

Only 45 questionnaires were returned completed. This was an 11 per cent return rate. A good return would be approximately 10 per cent, so this project exceeded the percentage of returns. There was some reluctance to complete the questionnaires mainly because potential participants did not know what they would be used for and whether there could be ramifications by participating. There was a sense of mistrust and misuse due to previous research projects.

In the focus group process, participants responded to the 10 questions. Their responses were recorded by the facilitator(s) and used as a part of the data collection process. Tape recorders were not used; however, participants had the option to complete the questions and return them to the facilitator(s), so that they could be used as a cross-reference with what was written during the focus groups.

Information Gathering Process

All responses from either of the information gathering processes are anonymous. An account of each participant's opinion, experiences and recommendation were noted. In the focus group discussion section, the commentaries were written based on the words spoken by participants and not the words of the consultant.

Data Analysis

An analysis was made of the responses to common questionnaires mailed out to participants in this study and the responses of those who answered another set of questions during focus group sessions. Conclusions and recommendations were recorded following the analysis section.

Objectives and Scope

The African Canadian Immigrant Research Project identified four objectives related to education and culture as listed below

- Identify and document both the education and training needs of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia, and how those needs can be met; and how the public school system can best serve immigrant African Canadian children.
- Identify and document the needs and challenges facing African Canadian immigrants in retaining and promoting their cultural identity, as well as the issue of "cultural conflict" between immigrant parents and their children.
- Assess the impact of culture and cultural identity on one's ability to integrate in a new society, and how this fits in with Canada's policy on multiculturalism.
- Share experiences, information, and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia and strategies for change.

This report will complete a needs assessment and propose solutions to meet the education and human resource development needs of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia. Therefore, it will focus mainly on objectives one and four.

Focus Group Discussion, Summary & Conclusions

Question 1

How would you define an African Canadian New Immigrant in terms of ancestry, heritage, geography, background, and culture?

There was a high degree of consensus in that many of the participants in the focus groups made a connection between recent immigrants and their African roots. Descriptions used to elaborate included language, culture, and a positive attitude toward education.

Participants stated that an African Canadian New Immigrant is:

- a person who is of African descent, regardless of where they were born or lived prior to their arrival in Nova Scotia
- a Black African originally from the continent of Africa
- a person of African origin who recently arrived in Canada
- a person whose parents are of African Heritage
- a person who was born here and is a child of African immigrants
- a person with Black ancestry and historical connection with Africa
- a person from anywhere in the world, regardless of language who came to Canada / Nova Scotia during the labor shortage or to go to university
- a person with common background in respect to African Culture, heritage, and ancestry
- a person with African roots from countries where the colonial system (e.g., Caribbean, Latin, or South America) was prevalent
- a person whose culture and background may vary, depending on the route that they chose to come to Nova Scotia on through women and the extended family
- a person who is perceived to be well educated
- a person whose culture originated from the continent of Africa—music, food, dress, religion, and so on
- a Black person not indigenous
- a person who received the message from family that education is important and a priority
- a person who is Black and living in Nova Scotia
- a person with an accent different from local Blacks and culture, with different experiences

Question 2

How Would You Define an African Canadian?

In defining African Canadian, focus group participants once again linked the definition of African Canadian with the individual's African roots and heritage.

Participants in focus groups stated that an African Canadian is:

- a person of African origin living in Canada
- a person who came to Canada from diverse backgrounds
- a Canadian of African descent who may have come from one country but whose origin is in Africa
- a person who may not be Black African but has African roots
- any person with roots to Africa including brothers and sisters who have lived in Canada for over two hundred years
- any person who belongs to the African Diaspora but not necessarily associated with colour, dark skin and African features
- a person of African descent living in Canada
- a person of bi-racial heritage
- a Black person who happens to live in Canada
- a Black person with shades of colour with different language, expression and appearance
- any person with African ancestry
- both a new Black Canadian and local Black Canadian
- one who is termed "local" as first being Canadian, then Black
- a person who was born in Canada with African roots
- a person who has immigrated here and is from Africa
- non-existent because this person considers herself to be African and not African Canadian
- anyone who thinks of Africa as part of one's heritage and ancestry
- a Canadian by birth, naturalization or citizenship
- a resident living in Canada of African descent—either recent or several hundred years ago
- one who is able to trace his/her ancestry back to Africa
- one who came to Canada from diverse backgrounds

Question 3

Would your response be different when discussing individuals of African heritage whose ancestors have lived in Nova Scotia for over 200 years?

As to whether their definition of African Canadian would be different when applying it to individuals whose ancestors have lived in Nova Scotia for 200 years, participants were fairly evenly split between the affirmative and the negative. They found many similarities in terms of heritage, customs, culture and traditions. Those who replied in the negative indicated that the definition of African Canadian would be different when applied to persons whose ancestors have lived in Canada for more than 200 years. They felt that cultural differences have evolved here over the years and that "local" Blacks have been significantly affected by racism and discrimination in the school system and society at large.

Participants responded by stating that:

- No, the response should be the same regardless of the group.
- Yes, because concerns are different for those whose ancestors have been in Canada for over 200 years.
- They have to deal with the concern of redress.
- No, both are same—a Canadian of African ancestry is an African Canadian.
- Canadians whose ancestors have lived here over 200 years may not know that they are from Africa.
- Some have no connection about where African Canadians come from.
- Yes, because the culture here in Nova Scotia is different from those who recently moved here.
- No, because traditions, if one looks at it closely, are very similar.
- Yes, because those with an African heritage whose ancestors have been here since the 1700s are "children of the Soul." More recent African Canadians may appear as visitors with citizenship status.
- No, Africans from the continent were, over the years, taken from different countries in Africa and had no idea where they appeared. They may have ended up in Nova Scotia and maybe "local" Blacks could be their relatives.
- Yes, first generation Canadians may feel outside but their children and grandchildren born here will think differently. They can claim their heritage here.
- No, it shouldn't be different because in systemic discrimination, distinction among Blacks is not made.
- The system will use any method to divide and conquer.
- This reference is directed to the attempts being made to have African Nova Scotians in conflict with more recent African Canadians.
- Yes, because those who are considered indigenous to Nova Scotia vary in shades of colour and in Africa they, in some cases, could be considered white.
- Yes, because the new immigrant is still torn between two distinct cultures and still emotionally attached to another country or part of the world. The individual may be still searching for identity within the Canadian context.

- No, if ancestors have been here for over 200 years, they still have African roots and practice African customs and traditions.
- Yes, because new immigrants would not have to be aware of the background, culture and understanding of circumstances in Nova Scotia. Whereas, those here since the 1600s, have a good understanding of the whole societal milieu—politics, culture, and living experiences.

Question 4

What was your vision and perception of education in Nova Scotia prior to coming to this country?

The perception of education in Nova Scotia held by immigrants prior to their arrival here was very positive and in reality "overblown." Many participants responded that they perceived education here as a means for advancement which they could not attain in their home country.

Participants responded by saying that:

- They had knowledge of international schools so they thought that it might be like that.
- Only the elite could send their children to these schools so others who couldn't afford that but could come to Canada perceived schools here as opportunities to receive top of the line education.
- They didn't have a very clear picture of Canada but were quite familiar with the British system and the colonial experience.
- Education in Canada was oversold and everything is perfect, positively promoted with Hollywood glamour.
- The perception was limited but felt that it should not be different from the United States.
- There was a perception that African students may not be ready for education in the western world.
- Education is much more competitive in Africa compared to here because students in Africa had to compete to get an education.
- The perception was that education was inclusive, progressive and much more advanced.
- Some were very knowledgeable about Canada because they started studying early in school.
- In their country they had to pass common examinations in A and B courses. If you didn't pass them, you had to go to upgrading school.
- They had no perception of education prior to coming to Canada. They received information about scientific fields from the library in their country.
- They came to get something that they were unable to get in their country. Some came here as students.
- Some came for advancement.
- They had heard from friends about universities in Nova Scotia such as Dalhousie and St. Mary's.
- Some were recruited by the Canadian government to accept a job in Halifax. It was felt that this was a good, quiet place to bring their children up.

- The perception of Canada was it was very good for advancement and strong in technology.
- There was not much discrimination in the school system and that education here was superior to their home country.
- When they came here, they couldn't return home until they successfully completed their degree.
- After being educated under the British tradition, high school in Nova Scotia was less challenging.
- They learned about education in Nova Scotia through friends and family who had returned from Canada while they were still in high school back home.
- Canada was recognized as having a high quality education system.
- Post-secondary education was not considered as good as one in the United States.

Question 5

What do most African Canadian immigrants experience in the school and adult education system, when they first come to this country?

The actual experience of African Canadian immigrants in the education system was widely divergent from their perceptions prior to coming. While some persons were pleased with their reception in the education system and the quality of instruction they received, for many others it was a negative "shock." For the first time, they experienced racism and discrimination in educational settings that did not seem prepared or willing to accommodate them. They also witnessed obvious discriminatory practices by teachers towards "local" Black students.

Participants elaborated:

- For the first time, they felt they were in a minority situation. This was an unusual experience.
- They experienced culture shock.
- They experienced isolation, a sense of disconnectedness between what they expect from the school system and the early practice of the school system.
- Some parents found it difficult to communicate with school officials.
- Some adults found their qualifications were not recognized by the education system.
- On arrival, especially as students, they were faced with the reality of racial tension.
- They had no understanding of what was going on with their children and thus relied on the expertise of the school administrators and teachers.
- They experienced different behaviours and were not sure how to respond to them.
- They were faced with name calling by classmates.
- They experienced low expectations by the teachers when they first came. If they did well, teachers accused them of cheating.
- Their children experienced negative incidents in schools such as: "Did you live in a house in your country?"
- They heard of students who showed disrespect towards teachers.

- Teachers had low expectations in academic matters but complimented achievement in sports and fine arts.
- They felt invisible in the curriculum.
- They experienced racism and language issues.
- Education back home was taught differently than in the new country.
- At home, students ran after teachers to learn and here it is the opposite.
- Computer technology in Nova Scotia is much more available.
- Some educators were receptive to their needs but others were not.
- People treated them with respect even though original Canadians felt mistreated.
- In his last year of high school, he could see for the first time different treatment (negative) of local Blacks by the teachers.
- In adult education, he did not feel threatened because at home he had white classmates, so he was prepared for this change in Canada.
- Teachers treated immigrant students better than local students.
- Some felt put down when they first came here.
- Her daughter in private school would come home and say, "I wish I was white and did not have curly hair."
- Kids would tease her when she spoke her own language and she was punished by standing in a corner.
- Teachers would discriminate against native Blacks.
- Native Black teachers felt isolated on teaching staffs.
- There appeared to be not much unity among Blacks who were born here and among our own Africans.
- Education system is structured differently with continuous assessment as opposed to term and end of year examinations.
- Some are very pleased with their connection with Blacks here – very positive – Brothers and Sisters.
- There is a tendency to point to black students as trouble makers.
- They faced discrimination and racism in the education system.
- Language is a factor in the success of Africans.

Question 6

What is the Department of Education doing for these immigrants in respect to:

Language

Given the importance of English (or French) language in a successful transition process, participants felt the Department of Education needs to extend its support to all areas of the province and to provide leadership to educational institutions at all levels. An aspect of this leadership must include much needed coordination among the various stakeholders.

The Department of Education identified a series of initiatives and programs that address these components—language and inclusion. They, however, indicated that schools and school boards respond to integration, diversity and cultural adjustment. Reference was made to ESL and the integration of African Canadian curriculum.

Participants responded:

- The Department seemed to "pass the buck" to the federal government.
- ESL is provided in the Metro Halifax area but not much in the rest of the province.
- Support is provided to schools through an ESL consultant.
- There is a problem in coordinating provincial responsibilities with federal funding.
- Organizations like MISA have to look for federal funding.
- ESL training in the community is done through MISA and other such organizations.
- The Ontario model is broader and offers support to more learners, i.e., adults and pre-schoolers.

Diversity

*In terms of **diversity, inclusion and integration,** participants voiced a recognition that while there are individual teachers in schools actively involved in promoting these areas, the overall picture is disappointing due to the lack of commitment by school boards and other educational institutions across the province. The Department of Education has been active in curriculum development but a much stronger leadership role is required.*

- Some attempts being made at the school level in terms of curriculum and "special celebrations."
- Not enough students are enrolled in Black History courses.
- Black History should be compulsory.
- Communities outside Metro need awareness of African Canadian Heritage and Culture; a specific curriculum has been developed by the Department of Education.

Inclusion

- Some areas have attempted teacher recruitment to reflect the school population.
- School Boards offer RCH support.
- School Boards have racial equity policies.
- African Nova Scotian teachers fight for the rights of black students.

Integration

- Some teachers try integration within the school climate.
- Little is done by school boards to facilitate the integration of immigrant children.
- Placement is often based on age, which leads to problems or stress.
- Some students feel embarrassed when they talk about "our culture."
- From the perspective of a university student, little is done to prepare or help professors.
- For international students, accommodations are difficult in the summer and there are no summer jobs.

Cultural Adjustment

- Although some materials are available, they are not being widely used.
- Neither the Department of Education nor the school boards have a plan for this.
- There is a women's group that meets monthly.
- A cross-cultural focus is taken by the Halifax County Multicultural Association.

Question 7a

In your opinion, does the culture of new immigrants from countries of African ancestry, enhance the success rate of their students in the educational system in Nova Scotia?

Participants were strong in voicing consensus that the culture of the new immigrants plays a major role in the success of their students. Parents and families are highly motivated and supportive of their children. Modeling, traditions and expectations are significant factors in educational success.

Participants responded by stating that:

- "Yes, it does contribute quite a bit."
- Immigrant students are much more motivated and appreciate education opportunities.
- The home environment made their children better students.
- If their children had started school outside Canada, they would do better here.
- Most parents are highly educated, therefore they had high success expectations for their children.
- "Yes, our children are looking for success, leaving deprivation behind and seizing a chance to move forward."

- Teachers seem to react differently to newcomers.
- The African Identity is strong and clarified in his mind so he is not in an identity crisis and, therefore, can focus on the task at hand.
- "Yes, a vision of the success of others before you provides a focus."
- "Yes, high expectations."
- "Yes, children mimic their role models."
- "Yes, there is an 'inheritance' in education."
- Before you leave, it is engrained in your mind where you have to go.
- For newcomers, it is a big thing to succeed, you can't afford to fail, and you have to make it.
- You don't have an extended family to fall back on. Otherwise, you will be sent home and humiliated.

Question 7b

What are School Boards doing to welcome, respect and appreciate differences?

Participants voiced a strong degree of dissatisfaction with respect to the efforts of school boards in welcoming, respecting and appreciating differences. While there is recognition of "pockets of excellence," participants expressed the fact that they are neither informed nor involved and that much must be done to motivate and assist the schools.

Participants responded:

- Not enough is being done.
- Parents are not being made aware of what is being done.
- A collaborative approach is needed in all communities.
- It was felt that race is a factor when schools deal with behavioural problems.

There is some recognition that Boards are trying to hire more Black teachers as role models, but many more are needed.

- There is a need to redress inequities.
- Teachers are stressed with workloads.
- There is a lack of appreciation of the home setting of some children.
- There is a need to include the Black community at various levels.
- Students are sometimes counseled into taking courses that exclude them from university admission.
- There is a need for Black guidance counselors.
- School boards have a responsibility to keep new immigrants informed and involved.
- School support workers are a positive influence.
- African Canadian Heritage Month seems to be taking on some meaning.
- Election of school board representatives from Black communities is positive.

- "We question the intensity of School Board efforts and whether these efforts are being measured."
- There are more administrators who are Black.
- Principals should be evaluated on the basis of their actions in this regard.

Question 8a

In June 1995, the Government of Nova Scotia accepted the Black Learners Advisory Committee's (BLAC) Report and its 46 recommendations. The report specifies redress for African Canadian learners resulting from discriminatory practices of the formal education system in the past. Are you aware of this report? If so, do you agree?

Many participants were not aware of the existence of the BLAC Report and its 46 recommendations, which in turn raises the question, "why not and what can be done to raise the level of awareness regarding the report?"

Participants responded:

- Many parents said they are not aware of the report.
- Others responded they had only a cursory awareness.
- Those who were quite familiar, said "It provided a focus on education." They were also able to point out the inequities identified in the report such as lack of facilities, teacher competence, lack of curriculum presence and the fact that racism affected economic and social status.

Question 8b

To what extent do New African Canadian immigrants benefit from these recommendations?

Those individuals, who were aware of the BLAC Report, saw many benefits for new African Canadian immigrants. Many took advantage of scholarship programs, and access to post secondary programs such as Education and Sciences. They, however, felt that they should be more actively involved in all aspects of the BLAC Report and its impact on African Canadian Learners.

Participants responded they see benefit in:

- Black History programs, scholarships and diverse cultural experiences.
- Creation of African Canadian Services Division and Council on African Canadian Education.
- Creation of Africentric Learning Institute; Regional Educators Program and African Nova Scotian School Board Representatives.
- Inclusion of culture and language in the scope of the Report.
- Given these accomplishments, new immigrants "don't have to start from scratch."

Question 9a

In the early and late 60s a number of individuals from the Caribbean, South America, the United States and Africa came to Nova Scotia to study at various universities. Many remained in the province and after graduation were employed in various professional fields. Have they made the transition and adjusted to a different environment and culture?

Participants' opinions were split in terms of whether or not African Canadian immigrants of the sixties were successful in making the transition to the environment and cultural milieu in Nova Scotia. More believed that they made the adjustment to live in Nova Scotia successfully but also realized that in spite of their academic and professional qualifications that were achieved in Canada, they still faced discriminatory barriers based on their race. They felt that their children who were born in Nova Scotia have faced and will continue to face, the struggles and obstacles that the "local" Black learners experienced over the years.

Most participants responded yes to this question for the following reasons:

- These individuals were already high achievers and overcame roadblocks.
- They were successful due to positive parental influence.
- They know the practical protocols and keep connections.
- We broke down barriers.
- A few participants responded in the negative.

Question 9b

Have these individuals been successful in participating fully and equally in Canadian society?

Participants were again split in their opinions on the success of immigrants in participating fully and equally in Canadian society. Recognition was voiced that many of these immigrants have done well in the workplace but have not become actively involved in African Canadian Community. The impact that these persons in the 60s and 70s had on the African Nova Scotian Learners was substantive because these learners had role models in post secondary institutions.

Most participants responded in the affirmative citing the following:

- They do well in the workplace, although not necessarily involved in the community.
- Yes, despite discrimination "Canada is still one of the best places in the world to raise a family."
- They have a good level of income and have the right connections.
- It was recognized that some are still struggling for this success.
- Although the first generation is generally doing well, their children do not seem as successful.
- A few participants responded in the negative way, citing the following: These individuals seem to be content in their own environment.
- They tend not to get involved.

Question 9c

Have the most recent immigrants and those who arrived in Nova Scotia in the 60s been more successful in the education system than those African Nova Scotians whose descendants arrived here in the 1700s?

Participants felt that recent immigrants, and those who arrived in Nova Scotia in the sixties, were generally more successful that those African Nova Scotians whose ancestors arrived here in the 1600's. Family support, motivation and a positive attitude to succeed were seen as significant variables in their success in education. They believed that their environment in their native country was conducive to seeing people from their race in various roles in their educational experiences. Systemic racism and discrimination were significant factors in holding back educational success for African Nova Scotians.

Most participants responded in the affirmative, their rationale being:

- As students they were top academic achievers in their own country already.
- Many of the children go on to college, "cream of the crop."
- They take their studies seriously.
- "We came at an opportune time, able to take advantage of the education system in Canada."
- We came at a time of affirmative action and benefited from this. "We have been successful to the extent Canadian society allows us."

The following rationale was offered as to why those African Nova Scotians whose ancestors arrived here in the 1700s hadn't been as successful in education.

- Racism in Canada had affected generations here.
- Our children have been ignored by teachers.
- Academic expectations have not been high enough.
- There has been inadequate exposure to technology.
- There hasn't been a tradition of going on to higher academic study due to an absence of role models.

Question 9d

Are immigrants who came to Nova Scotia within the last five years more successful in the education system than those who came to Nova Scotia in the 60s? Please explain.

Participants felt that those immigrants who came in the last five years are as successful because these individuals generally are coming to Nova Scotia already having obtained post-secondary degrees. There is concern among these immigrants that their credentials are not being recognized. In case of those who came in the sixties, most came as students and received their post-secondary credentials at universities in the province. In either case, they felt that they faced barriers for achieving employment at the level commensurate with their qualifications.

Analysis of Questionnaire: Educational Component

Forty-one questionnaires were received. Three were not included in the general analysis because on average only three of the 13 questions had been answered with a check mark and no other form of response.

The questionnaires were divided into three groups:

Married with children, Married, Single.

The following analysis is done with these stated categories.

In this analysis you will find the following:

- A chart indicating the response rate for each question will be included.
- The information gathered from each question will be presented and in some cases divided according o the categories stated above
- Concluding statement(s) will be drawn at the end of each question where appropriate.
- Concluding statements will be made to tie the analysis together.

Please refer to the Appendix for the questions.

Analysis

Category Information

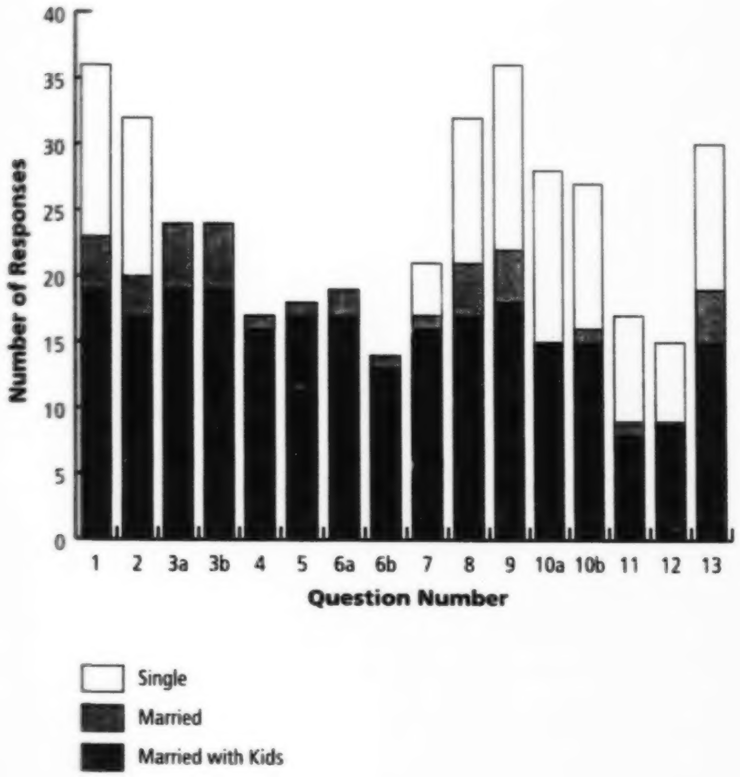
Figure 1: Number of responses by category

Category	Total #
Married with children	19
Married	5
Single	14
Total Respondents	**38**

Questionnaire Responses

Table 2: Summary of responses to selected questions

QUESTION	1	2	3a	3b	4	5	6a	6b	7	8	9	10a	10b	11	12	13
Married w/ kids	19	17	19	19	16	17	17	13	16	17	18	15	15	8	9	15
Married	4	3	5	5	1	1	2	1	1	4	4	0	1	1	0	4
Single	13	12	na	na	na	na	na	na	4	11	14	13	11	8	6	11
Total Responses	**36**	**32**	**24**	**24**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**14**	**21**	**32**	**36**	**28**	**27**	**17**	**15**	**30**



Question 1

There were a total of 36 responses to this question with two respondents refraining from answering. Twenty of the responses were that the experience was helpful, 7 harmful, and 8 indicated that it was neither harmful nor helpful.

Explanation of the experience being helpful:

- They had Canadian sponsors and, therefore, they had people to assist them in finding housing, food, clothing, etc.
- The Government of Canada sponsored them for a full year through basic assistance
- People were ready and willing to show them what to do
- The immigration officials were gentle, polite and welcoming
- They came as a visitor therefore had no problems
- They were briefed

Explanation of the experience being harmful:

- File was misplaced
- Did not get the right advice regarding business
- Felt that they were being judged
- Felt that they were being treated second class because of their language
- Students not permitted to work off campus
- Detained, locked up, and strip searched due to having cash on them to pay for tuition

Concluding Statement

For the majority of the respondents the overall experience was not bad. Those who had assistance from a Canadian organization or family found the experience to be very helpful. A number of the comments about harmful experience did not relate to the first contact immigration experience but to the process or opportunities available to them once they were here.

Question 2

Five out of the 38 respondents did not answer the question. Following are some of the positive and negative comments from the respondents.

Comments: ***Positive***

- They have gone on to further education, be it university, continuing education, community college, or English as a second language.
- They felt that there is a lot of educational opportunity.

- The system is very good and encouraging. They liked the concept that one could explore ideas and debate issues freely in class.
- The technology is a great plus since it is advanced and many programs are available.

Comments: *Negative*

- It was difficult for their families because they had to retake courses that they already had since their accreditation was not acceptable here.
- Because they have a family to support, the respondents felt that the educational process can become very long and drawn out. They do not have the funds to study and support their family too.
- The lack of funds could hinder the educational advancement.
- Finding work is difficult. There were comments that a good education did not guarantee one work. You are under-qualified before you take the training, and once you have the training, you are over-qualified.
- It was very expensive.
- There were no experienced teachers in African history.
- Some students felt isolated while at university and felt that they had received biased treatment due to their gender and race.

Concluding Statement

Most of the respondents have gone on to post-secondary education and find the school system very good. Some are even working on their second degree.

The expense of post-secondary education is an issue, as well as the fact that foreign degrees/diplomas are not respected, and people have to retrain in order to work in their area of expertise.

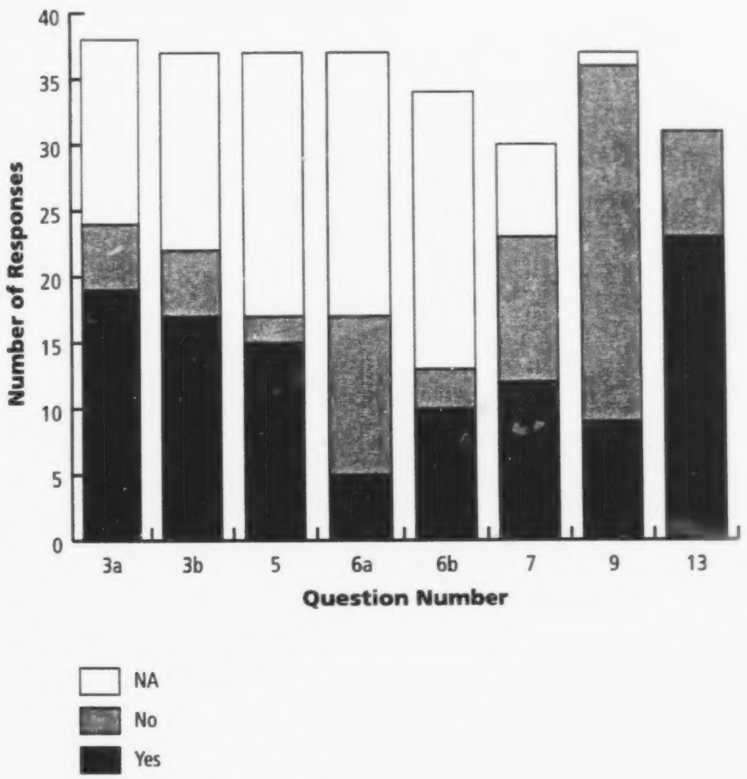
Moreover once they have done the retraining or upgrading, they are finding it very difficult to find employment.

The following section deals with questions that relate to families, those having children. The questions that have been omitted will be dealt with at the end of this section.

Questions Related to Families

Figure 3

QUESTION #	3a	3b	5	6a	6b	7	9	13
Yes	19	17	15	5	10	12	9	23
No	5	5	2	12	3	11	27	8
NA	14	15	20	20	21	7	1	0
Total Responses	38	37	37	37	35	30	37	31



Explanation of Figure 3

Line 1: Question 3a

Nineteen of the respondents arrived in Nova Scotia with their spouse, 5 without their spouse and 14 were not married.

Line 2: Question 3b

There were 24 respondents who had a spouse.

Seventeen of the 24 with spouses had children, 5 did not and the question was not applicable for 15 of the respondents.

Some of the people who arrived were meeting a spouse and children here, or their spouse and children were back home. Two out of five spouses who came without their spouse came alone because their spouse had to work out the notice period at work.

A couple of the respondents had grown-up children and some had children too young to start school.

Line 3: Question 5

Fifteen of those who came to Nova Scotia having children in their family felt that their children had been placed in the appropriate grade level and 2 did not. One of the two cited language problems as the reason for the grade placement and one indicated that the placement was due to non-recognition of prior learning.

Twenty indicated that the question was not relevant to them which means that one of the respondents with children is in this category. Perhaps due to the age of the child, this question was not relevant. This question was not answered by those without children.

Concluding Statement

The majority of the respondents felt that their children had been appropriately placed in the school system.

Line 4: Question 6a

Five of those with children felt that their children were in need of additional assistance at school. Five out of five needed additional instruction in English.

Three out of five indicated that reading was an area where assistance was needed.

Two out of five cited spelling as an area where assistance was needed.

One out of five cited math as an area where assistance was needed.

Two out of five were more general and cited English language assistance was needed. One of these two, identified tutoring as the assistance needed.

One out of five identified the need for assistance in adjusting to 1) the environment, 2) English language, 3) culture.

Four out of five who felt that additional assistance in school was needed believed that their children were placed in the appropriate grades.

One out of five felt that the appropriate assistance had not been given and had suggested the type of assistance that was expected to solve the problem. It was also believed that their child was not placed in the appropriate grade due to the language problems that would have been assisted by a tutor.

Line 5: Question 6b

Ten out of 17 felt that they had received the appropriate assistance from the system and three did not. Nine of the families with children did not answer this question. The non-applicable column contains findings for the 19 without children and 2 with children who did not find the question relevant. Yet they identified that once having spoken to the school authorities, their children received assistance during the initial period, to get acquainted with and acclimatized to the Canadian education environment. Children were 1) paired up with Canadian students, 2) directed to other resources such as the library and recreation centers.

Concluding Statement

On the whole, the majority of the respondents did not seem to need additional scholastic assistance in school. There were a couple who had language problems that were not adequately addressed by the system. The children seemed to be able to do well in spite of any language barriers.

Line 6: Question 7

Nine of the respondents with children and three of the students felt that the school had preconceived notions about them. Some of these notions are as follows:

- Schools appeared surprised that a child from a Third World country could excel in school and even do better than a Canadian student.
- They thought that every child from the Third World needs English instruction and resource help.
- They appeared surprised that the children had good study habits.
- They were not expecting the children to be able to do certain areas of study.
- They thought that the parents are semi-literate and know nothing about child rearing.
- School officials were surprised that the child could have technical knowledge and be able to communicate (write and speak) well in three languages.

Concluding Statement

Third World children were not expected to do well in school without a lot of assistance. If they did do well, it was questioned and the marks dropped to support the notions of the teacher. Due to the perceived notion that the children were not properly schooled, it was interpreted that the parents were poor guardians or ignorant people.

The university students felt that the expectation of their academic achievement seemed to be based on their race.

Line 7: Qustion 9

A number of the comments that were recorded here did not deal with one's culture. Those that did are as follows:

- lack of respect for teachers was an issue
- students thinking that they are the best and that is viewed negatively in other countries
- due to the Scottish roots the children do not fit in and are always on the outside
- low expectations of the students by the teachers because they are African
- silence in class viewed as non-participation when, in reality, in their former homeland, children do not express their views publicly in class

Three students responded to this question but it dealt more with the behaviour of students in the school system and not on how their culture impacted school officials' expectation of their behaviour and academic achievement.

Concluding Statement

There were a few incidences of culture creating problems in regards to a child's perceived academic performance. Due to the increased respect that is shown in other countries for adults, new immigrant children may be very quiet in class. When a child is silent in class it is viewed as the child not knowing the answer. This, coupled with a low teacher expectation, could cause a child who has more knowledge to receive a very low grade. If the child does well on a test, the teacher makes the assumption that the child has cheated and lowers the mark.

Line 8: Question 13

Twenty-three of the respondents feel that there are training opportunities to expand one's skills, so that in theory you will be more marketable in the workplace.

- Nine did not think this was the case.

The main '*yes*' comments were the following:

- There are a lot of training opportunities in many fields.
- There is easy access to the programs at the community college.
- Life-long learning opportunities are in abundance.
- There are many free workshops and classes.
- Many organizations offer training.
- Upgrading of skills is possible.

The '*no*' comments were as follows:

- There is an age barrier.
- Even after retraining, it is difficult to get a job.

- Assistance for those with children is not adequate to enable them to pursue training opportunities.
- Discrimination is evident.
- It is felt that older people are not being given the chance to get work experience and become integrated into the workforce even when they have good education and training.

Concluding Statement

Almost everyone agreed that the training opportunities are there, but it does not mean that you will be more marketable in the workplace. If your age or race or language skill is against you, training is not going to change that.

Also, the cost of retraining, in some cases is viewed as prohibitive. So, if you have the money you can take advantage of all the training opportunities. Being more marketable in the workplace is another matter.

Responses to the Remaining Questions

Question 4

Thirteen respondents identified that their children attended school in an urban setting and two indicated a rural setting.

In the rural setting, the children were in elementary.

In the urban setting five of the respondents had children in high school, three had children in junior high school, five had children in elementary, and two had children at university.

Most families had two or three children.

Question 8

The major ways in which people expected their life to change in coming to Canada are as follows:

- have peace and freedom
- a new way of living
- would obtain a higher education and would therefore be able to get a good job and be better off financially
- have access to more opportunities, work, education, freedom to be who you want to be
- benefit from the better justice, political and health care systems
- would be accepted for who they are
- for the better

Some did not feel that their lives changed for the better. A number indicated that they were worse off financially than they had been before and had not anticipated the racism that is prevalent in Nova Scotia.

Some did not expect their life to change on coming to Canada. They came because a spouse was here and or because they themselves were going to study.

Concluding Statement

The majority of the respondents believed that their life would change for the better. For many that has not been the case, due to lack of work leading to financial hardship.

Question 10a

The main responses from the married group regarding the positive aspects of education in Nova Scotia are as follows:

- it is free up to and including grade 12
- only need to buy school supplies
- everyone has the same opportunity to get an education
- schools are in the community
- studies in Fine Arts are offered
- computer literacy
- extracurricular and intramural activities
- flexibility in the school curriculum
- number of educational institutions
- encourages students to think for themselves and to find solutions
- allows children to have a broad knowledge base
- there is a link between students and teachers
- separation of students into grade levels instead of all the students being in one classroom
- able to study at home and maintain a full-time job

Of the married group seven did not answer the question.

Singles' Responses

- access to financial aid and free education at the public school level
- many educational institutions
- the system has high standards and is designed to take the student to the next level
- it is very encouraging
- special assistance is readily available
- few disruptions
- good facilities
- lots of choices

- you don't have to agree with the teacher in order to do well

Two of the single respondents did not answer the question.

Concluding Statement

Both the single and the married respondents identified that there is varied educational opportunity and it is free up to grade 12. After grade 12 there are many institutions to choose from for further studies. One has the opportunity to obtain a broad cadre of knowledge. The educational system is good, accessible, varied, encouraging and builds independent thought, enabling one to go on to the next level.

Question 10b

Married

Six did not answer this question and nine did not identify themselves as having any barriers. Those that did respond identified the following barriers:

- language
- race
- lack of role models
- low expectation of teachers towards students
- no African or Oriental study department
- high cost of tuition
- little or no regard for foreign accreditation

Single

Four of the students did not encounter any barriers and three did not answer the question. The major comments of those that answered are:

- low performance expectations
- language
- cost of tuition
- biased representation of people from another culture
- discrimination

Concluding Statement

Forty-one per cent of the married group did not identify any barriers whereas 50 per cent of the single group did not identify any barriers being encountered in the education system in NS. Discrimination came up in both groups as well as the high cost of tuition and the low expectations of teaching staff. For the students some of the discrimination was coming from other students in the system.

Question 11

Sixteen out of 24 of the married respondents did not answer this question. Those that did answer, cited the following:

- have more role models in the system through teachers or having professionals come and lecture
- have multicultural events and education for the community and the school
- meet with parents and teachers often and dialogue openly
- African immigrants need to band together to devise a strategy to break down the barriers and they need to attend parent-teacher meetings
- immigrants need to organize a community they can call their own

Single

- proper parenting at home
- work with the teachers
- change the curriculum and teach about foreign countries
- sensitivity training
- teach people the difference between NS Blacks and Blacks from Africa
- increase number of role models in the system
- increase the financial assistance and scholarships to people of African descent, disadvantaged, and low income earners

Concluding Statement

Both identified the need for increased presence of role models in the system, sensitivity training, a change in the curriculum, working with the teachers.

Question 12

Married

Sixteen out of 24 did not answer this question. The major responses were as follows:

- created opportunities for immigrant parents to get involved in committees and to volunteer
- anti-racism policies
- periodic parent-teacher interviews before school events
- sensitivity training of the students by the teacher
- celebration of cultural days
- school newsletter

Single

Nine out of 14 did not answer this question. The responses received were as follows:

- orientation
- clinics
- videos
- guidance counsellors
- international student services
- cultural awareness youth group
- Black Students Advisory Centre at Dalhousie

Concluding Statement

The activities put in place for each group seemed to be quite different, which is good. The university group seems to have more established organizations to assist them than the parents do with children in the separate schools.

Conclusion

Questions 11 and 12 did not have a good response rate. Eleven had a 45% response rate and 12 had a 39% response rate. These two questions dealt with the barriers in the educational system and how they could be overcome. This may be due to the fact that seven out of 14 (50%) of the Singles did not identify barriers in Question 10b and fiveteen out of 38 (39%) of the Married group did not identify barriers in the educational system.

In general, the newcomers to Nova Scotia seem to be happy with the educational system. They feel that it gives great opportunity for obtaining a varied education, teaching independent thought, and development for future learning opportunities. The advanced information technology that is available in the school system is considered a great advantage. There is a feeling that a lot of assistance and encouragement is available in the school system and that it depends on who your teacher/professor is, as to whether you will get the assistance/ encouragement that you need. If the instructor has preconceived notions, the assistance/ encouragement may not be as forthcoming as it should be. If the instructor has low expectations then he/she will be willing to accept low results from the student and not question why it may be happening. If the child has a language problem the teacher may put the low marks down to language difficulties and not delve further to more accurately identify the problem.

The respondents feel that proper representation of different cultures needs to take place and Nova Scotian communities need to be educated in the culture of other countries and in sensitivity awareness. The only representation that they have been made aware of is embarrassing and painful. There must be increased diversity in the educational institutions. The NSTU must be willing to do whatever needs to be done to hire new Black teachers, ensuring that they do not move away in order to get work. There must be more cultural activities taking place in the communities and in the schools.

One of the concerns that was identified on numerous occasions was that prior learning was not respected. The loss of one's credentials on coming here presents unnecessary hardship for the family, both in loss of time and money. Time - the person needs to retake courses that he/she has already taken; Money - the person instead of being able to work in her/his field to support themselves or their family, needs to study instead. Also, there is no financial consideration given to the family to assist them with the retraining.

Once the retraining has been achieved there is no guarantee of a job here in Nova Scotia. It is dependent on: how well one speaks the language, age, race, who you know. Those who get their education leave the province so that they can realize their work potential. They do not believe that with education they will become more marketable in Nova Scotia. They recognize that is the theory, but the reality is something different.

There is a desire of some of the Black newcomers to disassociate themselves from the rest of the Black community, since being connected to Nova Scotian Blacks will further disadvantage them. They have mentioned the need to educate the community regarding the difference between Africans from Africa and African Nova Scotians. The former have a good work ethic, are very professional, and are educated. There may be a need to give awareness training to some of the African newcomers regarding African Nova Scotians and their accomplishments.

Most of the respondents had settled in the urban areas.

Most of the new immigrants, viewed Nova Scotia as the land of opportunity but for many that has not been achieved. In order for that dream to become true one needs employment and that is hard to come by for a number of the immigrants who are here. Many of them have achieved that higher education but not the work to go with it. They have achieved the freedom that they were looking for, but not the financial success.

Definitions

African Canadian

A person residing in Canada of African descent.

Immigrant

A person who comes as a permanent resident to a country other than one's Native land.

(Webster's Dictionary)

What is an "Immigrant?"

The term "immigrant" is defined as a person who is a permanent resident born outside of Canada.

The term includes immigrants as geographically displaced individuals who leave their country-of- origin either by choice or due to unavailable circumstances.

Health Canada (1999): "An overview of Canadian research on immigration and health," Draft Discussion Paper Prepared for the Third National Metropolis Conference, Cat. No. H21-149/ 1999E. *http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iacb-dgiac/nhrdp/metropolis/*

Analysis of Data Collection Tools

The analysis is based on information from the questionnaire and focus groups. Overall, members of the African Canadian Community, whether they have been in Nova Scotia for centuries or arrived in this country in recent years, believe that they have experienced racism in the education system. However, more recent African Canadian immigrants came from an environment in which they were the majority population. Therefore, they felt comfortable and a part of their cultural environment in their home country. They came to their new life with great anticipation and energy. Their perception was that Canada was a land of freedom, growth and opportunity. Most were highly educated and arrived with one or more university degrees. With these credentials, they felt that they would be employed in their field of expertise in short order. Some soon found out that their educational background was not necessarily the key to permanent employment.

Other factors became evident to them. They realized that their skin colour, language, religion and culture in some cases played a significant role in underemployment and unemployment. They were not used to such an emphasis on shades of colour. In their country of birth, they saw individuals as citizens of a country first and then a member of a racial group second.

The request for a proposal states, "Like the rest of Canada, Nova Scotia is becoming increasingly diverse with each new wave of immigrants. This trend applies to the African Canadian community as well." This project provides a needs assessment and proposes solutions to meet the education and human resource development needs of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia. It has brought together African Canadian immigrants of diverse backgrounds to share experiences and ideas to foster their social, cultural, educational and political life in Nova Scotia. The research project will identify and make recommendations for the removal of barriers that hinder African Canadian immigrants from participating fully in Canadian society.

The preceding statements from the proposal outline the expectations from this process and identify factors that need to be considered when conducting the research. Whereas one of the four objectives is specifically related to education, this report will focus mainly on identifying and documenting the education and training needs of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia and how those needs can best be met, and finally, how the public school system can best serve African Canadian Immigrant children.

Background

To complete a full analysis of the information received from the tools used, one must first establish that the term *African Canadian* encompasses a multiplicity of Africans with different experiences, cultures and traditions. This is due to the different environments in which they have lived and developed. Once there is a recognition that differences do exist amongst people in Nova Scotia with African roots, there will be opportunities for the diverse segments within the Black African Community to come together in areas that will positively affect all of our learners.

Questions asked in focus group sessions sought participants' definition of African Canadian immigrants and African Canadians. There were many descriptors identified in determining an African Canadian Immigrant and an African Canadian. This alone, indicates the uncertainty of African peoples to clearly identify with Mother Africa. Most definitions, however, connect to Black Africa by stating such factors as: African root, African ancestry, continent of Africa, customs, etc.

There was difficulty in clearly differentiating between local Blacks who were born in Nova Scotia but able to track their ancestry to Africa, those who came to Canada as students in the 1960s, and those who recently came to Nova Scotia in the 1990s. Some chose to use "African Nova Scotian" to refer to Blacks who were born here and were descendants of the Empire Loyalists, refugees from the War of 1812, the Maroons from Jamaica, or the workers from Barbados who settled in Sydney, Nova Scotia in the 1900s. More recently, Blacks from the African continent, Caribbean islands, South America, United States, and other countries from around the world, would be referred to as being African Canadian immigrants or African Canadian.

There were some African Canadians who chose to move to Nova Scotia or other parts of Canada who adamantly said, "I am not African Canadian because I am an African who came to Canada and became a Canadian citizen." Hyphenated identification is not appropriate. Very few refer to themselves as Black and not African. Still others prefer to preface Canadian with their country of birth such as: Jamaica, Trinidad, Uganda. The challenge remains.

Barriers

The research clearly identified formidable barriers that impede full and equitable participation by African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia society. The most challenging and pressing barriers include:

- lack of familiarity with their new environment and its institutions, e.g., school system
- lack of post-secondary education
- lack of experience and expertise in the utilization of technology
- language – the perception that the spoken language of African Canadian immigrants will hinder communication effectiveness in the education setting or the workplace
- a sense of isolation or "not belonging" to either the local Black community or the community at large; this is exacerbated if they are without family support
- the "Credentials Myth" – their qualifications are not considered on a par with or equal to those obtained in Canada
- educators who are insensitive to their cultural background and unique strengths and needs
- inadequate coping skills and experience to deal with racism
- lack of skills, experience and confidence to deal with system conversions in employment and education

Pros and Cons of African Canadian Immigrants' Responses throughout the Research Project

- Perception and actual experiences in the education system in Nova Scotia
- Assessment of quality of education in Nova Scotia compared to home country
- Lack of utilization of competencies and skills sets by the system
- Connection between culture and education
- Desirability to connect with the local Black community

Consultants' Observations

- African Canadian immigrants have by and large completed post-secondary studies and expect their children to do likewise.
- Parents of students, whose ancestors have resided in Nova Scotia for centuries, have also encouraged and expect their children to be successful in the education system.
- Both groups of students have experienced and continue to experience subtle and systemic racism and discrimination in the education system.
- Black parents who lived in countries where they were in the majority have not experienced discrimination based on race and therefore would not be as aware of the challenges that local Black parents and students face on a regular basis.
- When African Canadian immigrants first come to Canada, they experience "culture shock" and this leads to a feeling of alienation and isolation.
- Some African Canadian immigrants who become Canadian citizens isolate themselves from the total African Canadian community.
- Some Black individuals, whether they are new immigrants or not, still have difficulty being referred to as "African" or conversely "African Canadian."

Consultants' Conclusions Derived from Contact with Participants

- More direct interventions must be made by school boards, Ministry of Education and school administration to welcome and receive African Canadian Immigrant learners, especially when they first arrive in the province. Most are highly motivated and want to succeed at the school and post-secondary levels.
- School administrators and teachers must appreciate the culture shock for these new persons and the trauma that these students experience in a new setting. Schools must design orientation sessions specifically for these students.
- The education system must maintain the interest and energy of these learners beyond their first few months in the system. As new African Canadian immigrants, they will adjust to their environment but will need to have direction from the school staff. They will receive this support from their parents and family at home.
- More attempts must be made to raise the success level of Black students whose ancestors came to this province in the 1700s. There is sufficient research evidence that indicates that the education system, since the early 1800s up to the 1990s, has not adequately served the academic needs of the African Nova Scotian students.
- The Black Learners Advisory Committee Report of December 1994 clearly documents the inadequate attempt by the system to educate African Nova Scotian students. In Volume 2, Section 3 - Aftermath to Cole Harbour, it reads in part,

  The educational history of Black Nova Scotians is characterized by a legacy of institutional racism. This continues to be demonstrated by exclusion, insensitivity, cultural genocide, stereotyping, discrimination and segregation. Attempts have been made by the Black community and other institutions.
- The African Canadian Immigrant community should make alliances with organizations and individuals within the established African Nova Scotian Community. Whereas the population of African people, regardless of when they arrived in Nova Scotia, is so small, it is essential that they join forces and network and partner with each other. This communication is a two-way exchange of intent.
- The adult community of new immigrants needs to do whatever is reasonably possible to be competitive in their fields of study. These transitional initiatives could be housed in the new Africentric Learning Institute.

Consultants' Recommendations

Based on feedback from

The African Canadian immigrants, African Nova Scotians, staff of Nova Scotia School Boards Association, staff of Department of Education, African Canadian Services Division and Superintendent of a local school board.

African Canadian immigrants who have been in Nova Scotia since the 1960s have experienced some success in the education system. In spite of their eagerness and motivation to learn and the support from their families, they are faced with barriers that hinder them from reaching their full potential. Education officials feel that they are providing resources and programs that will assist them to adjust quickly to the school and university systems.

Recommendation I

That the African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Group mobilize organizations in the new Immigrant community to use these reports to develop a position action delivery paper for the province of Nova Scotia, the Department of Education, the Nova Scotia Teachers Unions, the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, The Advisory Board for Community Colleges and Universities, the Maritime Council of University presidents, elected opposition parties, back benchers, and any other decision-making groups for an immediate response to the concerns of African Canadian immigrants.

Recommendation II

Results from this consultation clearly identify a need for African Canadians in Nova Scotia to communicate more and share the richness of their cultural experiences with each other.

That the African Canadian Immigrant community should work collaboratively with the African Nova Scotian community to co-host a symposium for all African peoples within the next 12 months. The purpose of this celebration and sharing is to educate and inform each other of the commonalties and diversities of our experiences. This gathering will dispel "myths" that each group may have about the other.

Recommendation III

This research process touched base with a number of persons who contributed to the education of African Canadian learners. Many recommended a forum or venue for the communities to network and become proactive. The question is always asked, where?

That the African Canadian Immigrant community becomes actively involved in the establishment of the Africentric Learning Institute. This institute will be a center of excellence with an Africentric approach to education. Many new African Canadians could bring to the institute their academic, research and policy development competencies. The institute could also play a significant role in the coming together of our people. We are so small in number; it is essential that we stand together.

Recommendation IV

The results from the questionnaires point out the significant number of individuals from the Immigrant and Refugee communities who are university graduates.

That African Canadian immigrants seek out the requirements that are necessary to obtain appropriate licenses or certification for meaningful employment. Established Black organizations and structures that were the by-products of the BLAC Report should become involved in facilitating this process immediately. Another function of the Africentric Learning Institute might be to offer training and North American concepts to any person who may wish some transitional skills.

Recommendation V

Training needs did not appear as a priority for participants in this research project. Most believe that they have proper qualifications to successfully pursue the professional field in which they are trained to work. In today's world of high technology and learned competencies, employers are interested in training their new candidates on the job as long as they have specific skills, aptitudes and positive work ethic.

That African Canadians pursue the potential of being an employee of the Public Service Commission of Canada, Civil Service Commission of Nova Scotia, Regional Municipalities in fields that they are highly qualified. With the "Embracing Change Initiative" of the Treasury Board Secretariat, the federal government is looking for visible minorities with specific skill sets and competencies. A number of these departments and agencies are self-contained and require qualified persons in the fields of science, technology, engineering, human resource development, finance, accounting and management. One in every five new employees will come from the visible minority group.

Recommendation VI

The African Nova Scotian Community has been involved in the struggle to provide an equitable education for children and adults. The population base of African Canadians is so small that it has been difficult to have the Black community represented in major areas in the government. The structures that have been established are for all African Canadians.

That the established organizations and structures for African Canadians reach out and involve new African Canadians with the Regional Educators program, Race Relations Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights, Student Support Workers, African Nova Scotian school board representatives, African Canadian Services Division, Council on African Canadian Education, Africentric Learning Institute, Black Cultural Center, Black Educators Association and other local organizations.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Some quotes from focus group sessions that support the conclusions identified:

"School boards and schools are challenged in their attempts to welcome students from different parts of the world. Teacher training in cross-cultural understanding is often brief, narrow and shallow."

"We came here at an opportune time. We were able to take advantage of the education system in Canada. We had to leave our place of birth to fulfill our goals and dreams."

"International students—there are no accommodations for us during the summer and there are no summer jobs." "Some assistance should be provided."

"Having been educated under the British Tradition, high school here was less challenging."

"I didn't really have any idea of what education was like in Canada. All I knew that once I came here, I couldn't go home without finishing the degree."

"Youth today do not have the resolve to move forward when faced with systemic barriers. As a result they reject the system and believe that it doesn't matter if you are professional or not."

"We have accepted those barriers even though we see those barriers and young people react against the system in an unacceptable way ..."

"We came to Nova Scotia at a time when the Black Power movement and Affirmative Action were high profile. People wanted to be 'do gooders'. Yes, I think that we have benefited from these movements."

"Local Black Canadians are 'Children of the Soil'."

"Yes we came looking for success, leaving deprivation behind for a chance to move forward. We came to better ourselves."

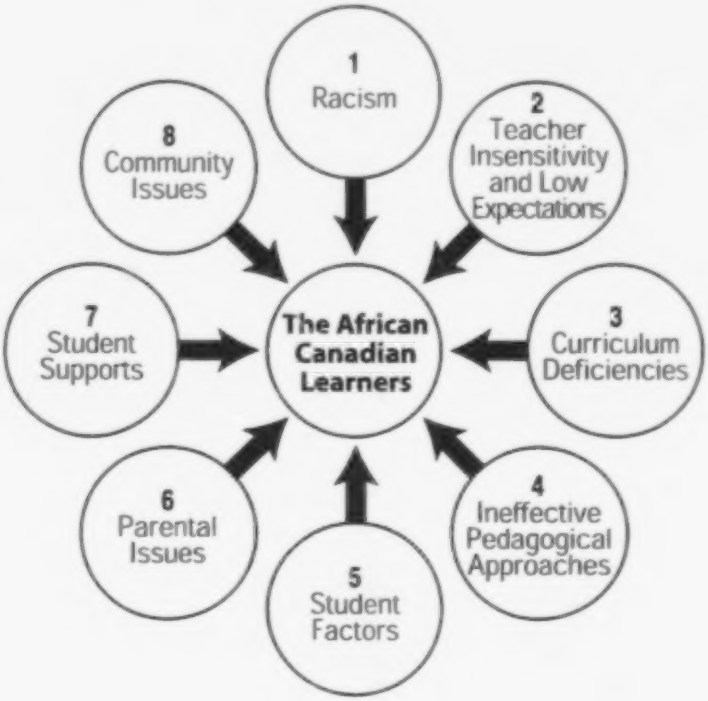
"This was instilled in our children that they must not make light of the opportunities they have now in Canada."

"The African identity is strong and needs to be clarified in his mind so he is not in an identity crisis."

"For newcomers, it is a big thing to succeed, you can't afford to fail, you have to make it, you have to do it, you don't have an extended family to fall back on."

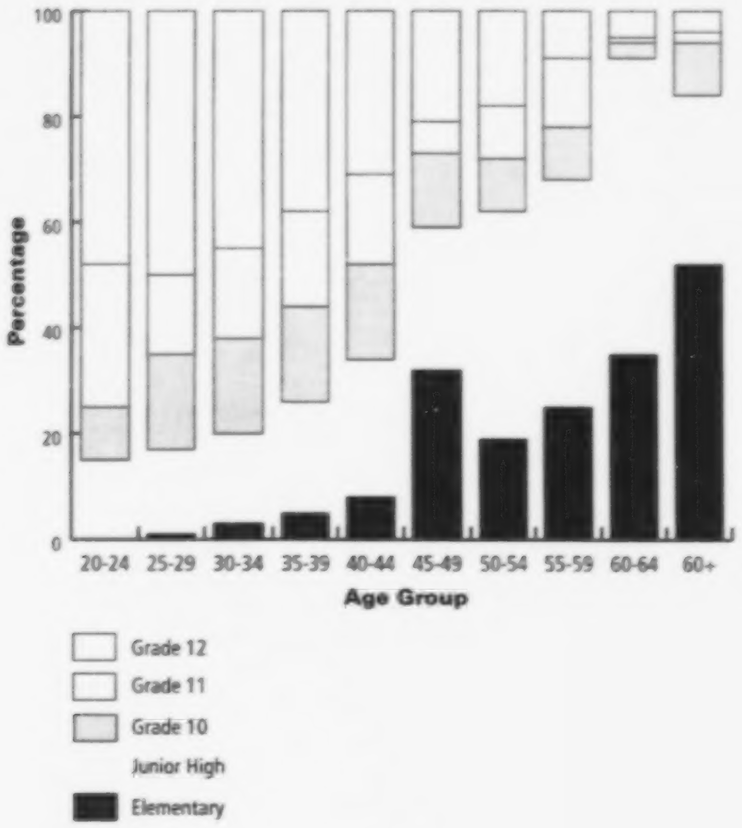
Appendix 2: Diagrams

Factors that contribute to the education of African Canadians


1
Racism
2
Teacher Insensitivity and Low Expectations
3
Curriculum Deficiencies
4
Ineffective Pedagogical Approaches
5
Student Factors
6
Parental Issues
7
Student Supports
8
Community Issues
The African Canadian Learners

Adapted from: BLAC Report on Education (1994), Volume 3, pg. 13.

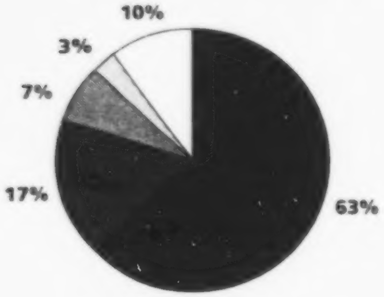
Highest Grade Completed by African Nova Scotians



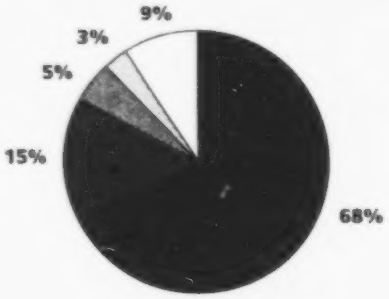
Adapted from: BLAC Report on Education (1994), Volume 3, pg. 65

The School Environment

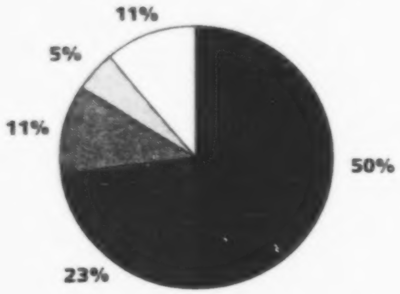
My school experience would have been more meaningul for me if:



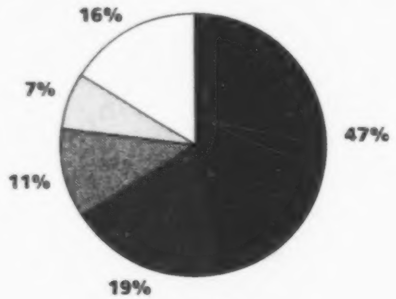
there were Black teachers in my school



there were more textbook references to Black contributions



teachers were sensitive to my learning styles and culture



I was not subject to racial discrimination

■ Agree Completely
■ Agree Somewhat
▨ Neutral
░ Disagree Somewhat
□ Disagree Completely

Adapted from: BLAC Report on Education (1994), Volume 3, pg. 30

Report 2:
African Canadian Immigrants Employment Research

Developed for
The African Canadian Services Division
Department of Education
Halifax, Nova Scotia
By Engineering Systems Research Inc. ESRI
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Section 4

Summary

The African Canadian Immigrant Employment Research Project (ACIERP) is sponsored by the African Canadian Services Division (ACSD), Nova Scotia Department of Education. The African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project (ACIARP) committee coordinates the project. The primary objective of the employment project is to research and investigate the marginality and the difficulty in access to employment that African Canadian Immigrants face in the Nova Scotia labour market. Engineering Systems Research Inc. (ESRI), a privately held research and consulting company, is retained by ACIARP to consult and conduct the employment research.

The primary objective stated above was accomplished using specific and non-specific research strategies. The specific strategy includes survey of African Canadian Immigrants in the six geographic regions and cities of Nova Scotia. The primary aim of the survey was to determine the employment profile of African Canadian Immigrants, obtain opinions with regards to various elements of the Nova Scotia labour market framework, and the attitudes of the labour market partners toward African Canadian Immigrants.

A structured questionnaire was developed and administered to the African Canadian immigrant community. Over 140 questionnaires were distributed to randomly identify members of the African Canadian immigrant community. Twenty per cent (20%), of these questionnaires were distributed to African Canadian immigrants residing outside Halifax Regional Municipality, while eighty per cent (80%), of the questionnaires were distributed to African Canadian immigrants residing in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

Within the time limit set by the consultants, respondents completed and returned 100 of these questionnaires. The overall participation rate for survey was 71.43 per cent province wide. Obviously, the survey was well received by the community, hence, we claim that the research project goal was also well received within the community. Eighty-six of the returned questionnaires were valid for our statistical analysis, while 14 of the responses were rejected by our screening process.

Non-specific strategies used by this research includes focus group meetings and one-to-one interviews. Focus group meetings of African Canadian immigrants were held in Halifax, Truro, Antigonish, and Sydney, while one-to-one interviews were held at Yarmouth, Kentville, and Windsor. Altogether, over 60 African Canadian immigrants participated in the focus group meetings and one-to-one interviews.

Representatives from various labour market partners participated in this research through informal meetings with the consultants. Over the period of this research, several informal meetings were held and secondary research conducted on more than 15 Nova Scotia labour market partners.

The research also developed a preliminary database of over 350 employable and employed African Canadian immigrants in the six geographic regions and cities of Nova Scotia. The database lists the names and current home or office telephone numbers of employable and employed African Canadian immigrants residing in the six geographic regions and cities of Nova Scotia. The database is not conclusive, hence we recommend updating the database, as more names become available.

From the analysis of the questionnaires and our various meetings with the members of the African Canadian immigrant community, and the representatives from various labour market partners, the following may be concluded:

African Canadian immigrant community:

- is highly literate, over 80.2 per cent of adult males are educated beyond high school, and over 33 per cent of adult females are educated beyond high school. The median education for both adult male and adult female is undergraduate degree.
- has an unemployment rate that is as high as 21.0 per cent among males and 25.8 per cent among females. The two unemployment rates are higher than the national and provincial unemployment rates.
- has an average annual household income for the community of $20,000, while the mode annual household income is $15,000.
- is under-represented, marginalized, and systemically denied access to employment opportunities and existing government programs.
- deserves the services of an advocating organization that will help create awareness of issues relevant to the nuclear community and to the general community. The proposed organization or agency mandate will include developing and coordinating programs that benefit the African Canadian immigrant community, create awareness of existing or new government programs.
- needs to develop community-based programs that will enhance their labour market and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- needs to develop programs that will help market their abundant human resources.
- immigrants operating small businesses experience unfair discrimination from financial institutions, government departments and agencies responsible for small business supports and assistance.

Nova Scotia Labour Market

Introduction

A labour market can be classified into two categories, stable and unstable. A stable labour market is propelled by predictable dynamics while an unstable labour market is propelled by unpredictable dynamics. An unstable labour market is usually associated with unstable and poorly coordinated labour market partners programs, as well as unstable government policies, while a stable labour market is associated strongly with stable and well coordinated labour market partners programs and stable government policies.

The Nova Scotia labour market can be classified as a stable market. Hence, to participate in this labour market as skills and knowledge providers, African Canadian immigrants must understand the market dynamics, trends and demographic influence. This chapter presents a brief review of the labour market dynamics, trends and demographic influence.

The Dynamics of Nova Scotia Labour Market

The labour market place is generally a trading place where buyers and sellers of skills and knowledge meet and negotiate. The labour market is propelled by certain dynamics; the most emphasized dynamics are economic growth and decline, new technology, government policies and emphasis. The labour market dynamics are driven by the mechanism that balances the demand for a variety of skills and knowledge with the ability to supply them when needed.

The market should be dynamic, and employment opportunities depend on the changing needs of the market, which also depend on the shifts in the economy. The labour market should supply the skills and knowledge necessary to support activities that sustain the economy. Important attributes of the labour market are the elements[1] that underpin the labour market.

These elements must be dynamic, and be able to link together and build a cohesive structure that supports a responsive and accessible labour market. An ideal labour market structure would provide more equitable access to the market for all Nova Scotians and provide purchasers of skills and knowledge the right environment to do business. The Nova Scotia labour market dynamics must be structured to include those variables necessary to respond to and protect the interests of African Canadian immigrants and other minority groups.

The Labour MarketTrends

Employment opportunities, the structure and nature of work and the skills and knowledge being sought in the labour market change with economic trends. The Nova Scotia labour market trends have mirrored the economic trends over the past decade (*Toward an Integrated Labour Market Framework: A Consultation with Nova Scotia's Labour Market Partners*, 1999).

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[1] For more information on the labour market elements, see Community Focus Group Meetings in this section.

The Nova Scotia employment trends have moved from resources, manufacturing and processing sectors to service delivery sector (*Nova Scotia Labour Market Outlook*, 1997).

The professional and other business service sectors will boast the strongest growth in activities over the next decade (*Nova Scotia Labour Market Outlook*, 1997). Hence employment opportunities in this economic sector will be very high.

More new jobs will be created by the accommodation, food, beverage, health and social services sectors during this period (HRDC-NS, 1997 and *Toward an Integrated Labour Market Framework: A Consultation with Nova Scotia's Labour Market Partners*, 1999). In order to participate fully in the emerging sectors, the African Canadian immigrant community must be accorded the same opportunities as other Nova Scotians by the elements within the labour market framework.

An emerging business opportunity that presently is reshaping the service delivery sector and also encouraging the migration of young Nova Scotians out of the province to larger urban cities is the opportunities created by early retirement to the baby boomers. Some people opting for the early retirement in some establishments[2] end up taking part-time appointment in the same position they are retiring from. This action limits the hiring of younger graduates, hence their marginalization, and subsequent migration to other provinces for job opportunities.

If this trend continues, it can then be projected that the average age of Nova Scotia workforce will be close to 50 years by the first quarter of the next century. This trend will also create a boom to those service delivery businesses that target seniors, while service delivery businesses that target young adults will be in decline.

Demographic Effect

The composition of the workforce and the characteristics of the labour market are influenced by demography. Understanding the composition of a population and the activities generated by the population is critical in strategic planning. The 1981 Census lists the Nova Scotia population as 899,942, and the 1996 Census lists the Nova Scotia population as 909,282.

The population of the province increased by 9,340 or 1.04 per cent between 1991 and 1996. During the same period, the population of African Canadian immigrants settling in Nova Scotia increased by 415 or 87.37 per cent of the 1981 population. Hence, African Canadian immigrants accounted for 415 or 4.44 per cent of the population change in Nova Scotia during this period (Census Canadian Beyond 20/20 Browser). About 90 per cent of the African Canadian immigrants settling in Nova Scotia reside in Halifax Regional Municipality, while 10 per cent of the community settle outside Halifax, throughout the province.

It is disappointing to note that the African Canadian immigrant community did not record appropriate growth in employment between 1987 and 1997, while statistics indicated significant growth in employment for most parts of Nova Scotia between 1987 and 1997. Although the community contributed significantly to the population changes recorded for Nova Scotia between 1981 and 1996, ironically they failed to benefit from the labour market dynamics that are propelled by demography.

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[2] Most common in the federal public, civil service and the universities. Not applicable in the private sector.

Community Focus Group Meetings

Introduction

In every labour market, certain dynamics are inherent to the market. Factors or elements that are also inherent to the market propel these dynamics. The element that drives the market hence determines the level of participation by parties providing skills and knowledge, and parties seeking skills and knowledge.

The main objective of this chapter is to seek the opinions of African Canadian immigrants with regard to the definitions of the elements that propel the Nova Scotia labour market. This objective was accomplished through various focus group meetings, one-to-one meetings and interviews.

Community focus group meetings were held in Antigonish, Halifax, Sydney and Truro, while personal interviews and meetings were held in Kentville, Windsor and Yarmouth. These meetings discussed in detail those elements of the labour market that were perceived as contributors to employment access denial and marginality of employable African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia.

Over 60 African Canadian immigrants participated in the focus group meetings, one-to-one meetings and interviews. This chapter presents the discussions and the recommendations of the focus group meetings, one-to-one meetings and interviews.

Initial Experience

Every immigrant that arrives in Canada has a special memory or memories of their first arrival experience. This special experience in many cases contributes to the settlement and the future development of the new immigrant. Participants in the focus group meetings, one-to-one meetings and interviews were asked to generally express their initial experience on arrival in Canada.

The general view from the focus group meetings indicates varying initial experiences by African Canadian immigrants settling in Nova Scotia. Most immigrants that moved to Nova Scotia from Ontario and western Canada indicate more positive initial experiences than those that entered Canada through Nova Scotia.

Also immigrants that came to Canada first as students felt that Canadians are friendly and hospitable to visitors, while Immigrants that came to Canada as permanent residents felt that Canadians are friendly, however, the system is not friendly to new Canadians of African descent. Permanent residents entering Canada through Nova Scotia presented the strongest criticism of the services provided to them during their initial arrival.

Some immigrants express the opinion that their first contact with the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) did not meet their particular needs. While some Immigrants were generally not aware of the services provided by MISA to new immigrants, hence they express the need to increase MISA visibility within the African Canadian immigrant community. They recommended that MISA should enlist the services of African Canadian immigrants in its community outreach program and counseling staff.

Job Search Experience

The labour market is a trading place where buyers and sellers of skills and knowledge meet and negotiate. To secure employment, every applicant available for employment in the labour market must search for an appropriate buyer of his/her skills and knowledge. To be able to find this buyer, the applicant must use a job search technique that targets prospective buyers of his/her skills and knowledge.

This element of the labour market was examined in detail. Members of the focus group critically examined the barriers relating to employment, with regards to the African Canadian immigrants.

Job Search Assistance Service

Most participants in the focus group meetings were aware of different government programs and services, such as the Human Resources Development Canada Employment Assisted Services (EAS), Job Finding Club, etc. These services aim to assist individuals to enhance their employment opportunities. The job search assistantship service provided by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), African Canadian Employment Clinic (ACEC) and other agencies are designed for the general public or target groups.

Most members of the African Canadian immigrant community who required these services experienced different levels of disappointment when accessing or inquiring about these services. Some members were critical about the quality of service they received, while others were critical about the attitude of the service representatives of these agencies and departments.

Some participants emphatically stated that some of their inquiries were not adequately responded to. In some cases, they felt that maybe they are in the right place at the wrong time. Participants were of the opinion that the EAS and other services should include some aspects of the African Canadian immigrant experience. The fact that many African Canadian immigrants arrive in Canada with education and work experience above the average of the EAS users makes it somehow difficult for these immigrants to use the generalized version of the EAS, while some African Canadian immigrants felt that these agencies or the HRDC should include African Canadian immigrants or organizations in their policy resources list.

Labour Market Obstacles

Five elements of the labour market framework African Canadian immigrants identified as being responsible for affecting their fair participation in the Nova Scotia labour market are:

- previous job experience
- networking
- cultural values

- communication
- professional accreditation

Subsequent subsections are a representation of the opinions of the African Canadian immigrants with regard to their labour market experience, and how employers of skills and knowledge use these elements to deny African Canadian immigrants access to employment.

Job Experience

Nova Scotia employers requiring specific skills and knowledge favour hiring experienced skilled workers over non-experienced skilled workers. However, it is disappointing to note that job experience obtained in Africa or the Caribbean is not accredited as comparable skills and knowledge in Nova Scotia's labour market.

In some isolated cases, university teaching experience obtained in Africa or the Caribbean was accredited by some Nova Scotia universities. The perception of most participants was that employers use non-Canadian related work experience as an excuse to deny African Canadian immigrants parity in employment.

Some participants felt that participation in the labour market by African Canadian immigrants should not be categorically linked to their previous non-Canadian work experience. However, there was also a strong definitive argument from some participants that they have been denied parity in their workplace due to their credentials[3] and their country of origin. Hence, it was recommended that the African Canadian immigrant community should develop a supportive logistic process that will accelerate the process employers use to quantify, qualify and verify the experience gained in Africa or the Caribbean.

Networking

An important element of the labour market is the medium that employers use to communicate their needs. In the Nova Scotia labour market, many higher-salary vacancies in the market are not listed or advertised. Some are even advertised after the positions are filled. The medium employers use to communicate their needs to the market was discussed in detail by the focus group.

The medium plays a significant role in the market place; hence, job seekers must be familiar with this element of the labour market. The communication media consist of word of mouth or referral, newspaper, community bulletin board, employment kiosk (HRDC), employment websites and television.

The most powerful and effective communication medium in the labour market is word of mouth or referral. As noted previously, many higher-salary positions including professional jobs are rarely listed or advertised through regular advertising media. For this category of vacancies, referral or networking as it is commonly referred to and employment placement agencies are frequently used to fill these positions.

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[3] Credential accreditation is not handled by employers, but by some Professional Associations such as Association of Professional Engineers of Nova Scotia, Medical Society of Nova Scotia, Law Society of Nova Scotia, Department of Education , etc.

In order to participate actively in the labour market, community visibility is paramount. The African Canadian immigrant community is not formally organized; hence it lacks cohesiveness. An important element of a formally organized group is the ability to mobilize and network its membership. This structure is currently missing within the African Canadian immigrant community. Hence it was recommended that an organization or an agency be established to help organize and network internally (among members) and externally (linking the community with external agencies and organizations).

Cultural Values

Cultural values and stereotypes were identified as an element of the labour market that contribute to access denial and discrimination against African Canadian immigrants in the labour market. Stereotyping is preconceived assumptions and pre-judgment, in this case by employers, of the type of jobs that are appropriate for African Canadian immigrants.

Some participants were of the opinion that some employers create a stressful work environment for African Canadian immigrant workers by demanding more performance than their regular job routines require. Hence, immigrants exposed to such an environment appear unstable and insecure and not diligent in performance of their routine jobs.

Another concern raised by some participants is the preferential treatment accorded to their immigrant counterparts from Europe or Asia. In their opinion, some of these groups of immigrant workers do not face a similar stressful work environment while performing their regular job routine.

Disparity in the labour market was discussed, and many participants felt that parity and disparity are the norms among Nova Scotia private employers. Job disparity was also correlated with cultural difference. Some participants insisted that employers use cultural difference and the fact many immigrants are new and in need of sustainable employment to practice job disparity.

Participants felt strongly that there is no equal treatment or equal pay for equal work within the system. Also a major concern is the fact that African Canadian immigrant workers are laid off first during downsizing. Most establishment management commends African Canadian immigrants for their high skills and knowledge, however, when there is a need to promote to a management position, African Canadian immigrant workers are rarely awarded this opportunity.

Communication

Communication has been cited by employers as an element that affects the performance of African Canadian immigrants during job interviews. Some employers cited accent as a barrier, while some stated that, it is difficult to understand or make out what some immigrants are trying to express. Some employers referred to this issue as a language problem.

The communication element was discussed by the focus groups in detail; most participants express disappointment over the accent factor. Participants appreciate the fact that English is not the mother tongue of most African Canadian immigrants. However, English is one of their official languages, as well as the language of instruction in many African and Caribbean Countries, hence employers should show some sense of understanding.

Immigrant groups with European ethnicity such as Greek, Turkish, Portuguese, Dutch, Scottish, Irish, German, French, Italian, etc., were cited as groups whose mother tongues, official languages, as well as, their languages of instruction are not English. These immigrants have accents, however, it appears as a result of their origin, employers do not stress difficulty in understanding their accent.

Participants indicated that the Canadian English and French are accented when compared with the English and French languages spoken in Britain and France. However, their accented English and French do not deny them opportunities outside Canada.

The general opinion of the participants is that the labour market is discriminatory, and excuses such as accent among others are used to deny African Canadian immigrants access to employment and other services. Participants express the desire to establish an organization that will advocate on their behalf, and hopefully help to increase employers' awareness and sensitivity towards African Canadian immigrants.

Name Factor

During job search efforts, some African Canadian immigrants claimed that they were denied job interview opportunities as a consequence of the perceived difficulties in pronouncing their names, as well as outright discrimination based on ethnicity. Hence, using their African names for job search may contribute to some extent toward the existing barriers they already face in the labour market.

This element of the labour market was discussed in detail by the focus groups. The element generated mixed reaction from the focus groups. Many participants indicated their ignorance of this element, although the general view strongly supports that employers may use such an element to deny qualified African Canadian immigrants employment opportunities.

Some difficult-to-pronounce European and Asian names with closely connected consonants were cited, and participants wondered why employers felt comfortable in pronouncing these names, and uncomfortable with African names. A general disappointment was expressed with the labour market; however, an advocating body was recommended to help create more awareness.

This organization will be charged with the responsibility of keeping track of issues of this nature. Participants were of the opinion that an issue of this nature, if well publicized and strategically challenged, will deter employers from such practice in the future.

Accreditation

Difficulty in accrediting degrees, diplomas, certificates and professional licenses obtained outside Canada, United States, or western Europe countries was cited as a barrier in securing employment by members of the African Canadian immigrant community. The most challenging areas cited were teachers certification, medical board licensing, other professional licensing boards and professional associations.

Variation in curriculum and programs at the tertiary institutions level were discussed. However, participants were of the opinion that the Canadian education system has evolved from the British education system just as many African and Caribbean countries education systems evolved from the British education system. Many Canadian tertiary institutions are structured like their British counterparts; hence, the Canadian certification bodies should accredit African Canadian immigrants with degrees and diplomas from an African tertiary institution.

North American influence notwithstanding, participants were of the opinion that, there are many similarities between the Canadian education system and those of many African and Caribbean countries. As a result, they suggested that the certification bodies should be aware of these similarities, with the hope of improving the process of accrediting.

However, some certification bodies indicated that they are aware of some African and Caribbean countries' education systems. Some of these bodies indicated that they have no difficulties accrediting degrees, diplomas and certificates from recognized overseas tertiary institutions, and this includes African and Caribbean universities.

The teachers' certification registry indicated that any teachers' training that deviates from a four-year undergraduate program or its equivalent is not recognized as teachers' training, and it cannot be accredited in Canada. The registry also emphasized that any teachers' training outside the four year BEd or its equivalent is unacceptable for certification. The Association of Professional Engineers of Nova Scotia (APENS), and the Bar Society of Nova Scotia also cited similar policies.

Some of these licensing bodies further explained that in all cases, an applicant with a Master's degree in the area of their accrediting are denied licensing as long as the applicant lacks formal undergraduate training or its equivalent in their area of certification or licensing. However, in some exceptional cases, applicants with Master's degrees and undergraduate equivalent in a closely related area may be certified or licensed if additional undergraduate core courses are completed.

Recommendation

We recommend more comprehensive research in this area. As noted previously, this topic is not part of our formal mandate. However, a strong correlation between education and employment demanded this investigation. We are hopeful your committee will further pursue this work to a greater detail.

Training/Education

Skills and knowledge are essential elements of the labour market framework. Employers of skills and knowledge seek applicants with outstanding records in both elements prior to any other additional elements of the labour market framework that may be used to further classify the available position.

The question relating to "the need to undertake additional skills development" was discussed in detail. Many participants did not see the need for additional training as a prerequisite to securing employment in their area of specialization. However, due to lack of opportunities in their primary area of specialization, some African Canadian immigrants retrained in new areas in order to secure employment, or enhance their chances of securing suitable employment.

Accreditation was revisited during discussions regarding education. Participants were asked whether they or any other member of the African Canadian immigrant community known to them were required to take additional course(s) as a requirement to accredit their certificates, diplomas or degrees. The general response was positive; no one with an undergraduate degree or equivalent has been subjected to upgrading his or her degree through additional courses.

New African Canadian immigrants may have the required credentials and knowledge to compete in the labour market. However, they may not have sufficient technology-based skills, such as computer skills, that are essential to perform job-related assignments. This group of African Canadian immigrants has a severe disadvantage, as the only specialized skill development training open to them is self-sponsored training. Many specialized training programs offered by the Nova Scotia Community College are usually expensive.

Many Nova Scotia Community College students receive financial assistance through the Skills and Grant program managed by Human Resources Development Canada. And to be eligible for HRDC sponsorship, applicants must meet certain criteria such as being currently in receipt of Employment Insurance (EI) or having received EI benefits in the last three years. Most recent immigrants are not eligible for HRDC sponsorship; hence, other departments may be sought for support.

Many participants felt that efforts should be made to help recent immigrants secure necessary information that will enable them to decide how to acquire sufficient job-related skills. It was also recommended that the community should develop a process that will help certification and licensing bodies enhance and speed up their various processes.

Self-Employment

Establishing a self-employed business is very demanding and challenging. Any successful self-employed business is propelled by a motivation factor. The motivation factor may either be the will to manage your time and make money for yourself, or the will to have employment and meet financial obligations. Hence, it can be concluded that many entrepreneurs venture into self-employment business either by choice or by default.

In the case of choice, we refer to the first motivation factor. This category can be further subdivided into two subcategories that are distinguished by the class of inherent decisions that are required to establish and run the venture. The first subcategory class is the so-called first-generation entrepreneurs. First-generation entrepreneurs face challenges that vary considerably, and in some cases are very challenging and outright difficult. Their challenges include identification of an appropriate venture, startup and running decisions, access to capital, and marketing.

This group develops business conceptual plans and makes initial business investment decisions. The other generation entrepreneurs consist of those that inherit the business from the immigrant entrepreneurs. The challenges faced by these groups are moderate but not necessarily easy. Most African Canadian immigrants in this choice category belong to the first-generation entrepreneurs.

In the case of entrepreneur by default, we refer to the second motivation factor. The obvious reason for which many entrepreneurs in this group turn to business is lack of gainfully paid employment. Challenges faced by this group are substantial and in some case very stressful.

Challenges in this category include identification of appropriate business ventures, access to venture capital, marketing, startup, day-to-day operations, cash flow, etc.

Most self-employed African Canadian immigrants encounter similar barriers while operating their businesses in Nova Scotia. The most common barriers cited are accessing government programs for small and medium-size businesses, training, support and services.

Government Programs

Some African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs are not aware, nor have accessed, some of the existing federal government sponsored programs for visible minority groups. Some of these programs may be helpful to them in order to enhance their competitive edge in the self-employed business sector, while some are familiar, and have accessed and benefited from some of these programs and services.

Some entrepreneurs cited visibility of the government agencies empowered to deliver programs in the community as a major concern, while some immigrant entrepreneurs were of the opinion that some of these agencies do not encourage participation of the African Canadian immigrant community. It was felt that there is systemic discrimination within some agencies, their policies and practices, as well as staff attitudes that perpetuate outright discrimination.

The commercial banks were cited as a good example of this claim. African Canadian immigrants contended that, in most credit or loan requests the banks have basic guidelines for loan approval. However, this guideline includes a clause that has vested extraordinary power to loan officers. This clause empowers the loan officers to use their discretion in some cases to deny or recommend applicants for loan approval. Recently many banks are using the Internet (Electronic Commerce) and telephone to provide some of the services previously done in person. The banks hope this new approach will eliminate wasted time and help reduce some of the race-related problems.

Consultation with Labour Market Partners

Introduction

Labour market partners can be grouped into two major categories, employers of skills and knowledge, and employment services providers. The two major partners' activities in coordination with other pertinent activities determines the employment trend. The influence of their activities on the trend manifest through various influences they exercise on the elements of the labour market framework. These elements directly or in-directly determine the labour market trend, hence the employment trend.

This chapter is devoted to our informal discussions with representatives of the two categories. The informal discussion aims to uncover those elements from the point of view of partners that may be severely contributing to employment-related problems within the African Canadian immigrant community.

Issues raised and discussed include known employment barriers, factors such as qualifications, previous experience, ethnicity, job search skills, interviews, credentials, financing, starting and operating a self-employed business.

The Composition of the Public and Civil Service

Most employers have no breakdown records of their employees with regards to African Canadian immigrants or indigenous African Canadians. This unforeseen problem during the conceptual stage of the research manifested during our discussions with employers. The Employment Equity Act, does not provide separate classifications for African Canadian immigrant and indigenous African Canadians. Both the Indigenous and Immigrant African Canadians are classified as Black Persons, or African Canadians.

Table 3.1 lists the number of those of African Canadian descent employed in the Nova Scotia Civil Service, while Table 3.2 lists the level of representation of employment equity groups in selected Federal Public Service Departments as of March 31, 1998.

Table 3.1
Nova Scotia Civil Service Designated Affirmative Action Groups by Year (Head Count)

Fiscal Year	Aboriginal Persons		Black Persons		Other Racially Visible Persons		Persons with Disabilities		Women		Total Complement	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1993/94	36	0.31	200	1.73	104	0.90	829	7.18	6,880	59.57	11,550	100.00
1994/95	34	0.31	193	1.78	87	0.80	686	6.32	6,597	60.82	10,846	100.00
1995/96	34	0.31	194	1.78	98	0.90	658	6.04	6,723	61.74	10,890	100.00
1996/97	26	0.33	151	1.94	61	0.78	522	6.69	4,380	56.15	7,800	100.00
1997/98	29	0.40	146	1.99	60	0.82	476	6.50	4,080	55.70	7,325	100.00
1998/99	30	0.40	157	2.08	59	0.78	456	6.03	4,242	56.11	7,560	100.00

Table 3.2
Level of Representation in Selected Departments as of March 31, 1998

Department	Women	Aboriginal Peoples	Persons with Disabilities	Persons of a Visible Minority
	%	%	%	%
National Defence	34.2	2.0	3.5	2.7
HRDC	70.3	2.7	6.7	4.4
Transport Canada	36.1	1.8	3.7	4.8
Agriculture and Agr-Food Canada	41.7	1.1	3.0	4.8
Public Works and Government Services Canada	47.2	1.8	5.9	6.6
Environment	36.7	1.2	2.3	5.0
Fisheries/Oceans	25.7	1.5	2.1	2.7
Industry Canada	46.3	1.1	4.1	5.7
Natural Resources	35.6	1.3	2.3	5.6
Department of Finance	50.9	1.1	2.4	5.3
Veterans Affairs Canada	66.3	2.9	5.2	5.5
CHRC	65.4	7.8	9.5	7.8
Depart of Justice	62.2	2.8	3.4	4.8
Canada Labour Relations Board	68.9	1.4	2.7	2.7
Public Service Commission	62.9	2.9	6.4	5.5
Revenue Canada	54.5	1.5	2.9	6.6
Treasury Board Secretariat	57.9	1.9	5.3	5.1
Statistic Canada	49.2	1.1	2.5	7.5
Overall Treasury Board Availability Estimate	48.7	1.7	4.8	8.7
"all occupations" rate Census 1996				10.3

Hence there is no official record on the number of African Canadian immigrants that are employed in the public and private sector of the labour market.

However, the list of African Canadians employed in the public service and those employed in the civil service can be obtained through the Human Resource departments in the private and public institutions.

Qualifications

Skills and knowledge are among the essential elements of the labour market framework that are sought for by employers. Most vacant positions in the labour market include the minimum educational training essential for performing assignments related to the position.

A good percentage of the African Canadian immigrants settling in Canada originally arrived as students in pursuit of academic excellence. Hence, the literacy level in the African Canadian immigrant community is relatively high.

The African Canadian immigrant community of Nova Scotia is highly literate. The high literacy level can be linked to the relatively large number of tertiary institutions in the Halifax metropolitan area, as well as the fact that many African Canadian Immigrants originally came to Canada to pursue higher education. As a result, the average educational training of African Canadian immigrants settling in Nova Scotia can be equated as tertiary education level.

With such educational training, many African Canadian immigrants who are seeking employment in the Nova Scotia labour market claim to possess job-related education and training that surpasses the minimum education required for many job positions in their various areas of interest.

Many labour market partners that participated in this discussion shared a similar opinion as expressed by members of the African Canadian immigrant community, regarding their job-related education preparation. Some participants indicated that African Canadian immigrants seeking employment in Nova Scotia sometimes possess outstanding and competitive academic credentials.

In some exceptional cases, their credentials are overwhelming when compared to the vacant position education requirements. Hence, many participants were of the opinion that, additional job-related education and training might not be necessary. As long as African Canadian immigrant applicants remain in their area of primary academic training they are qualified for the vacancy.

Previous Job-Related Experience

Most African Canadian immigrants have cited previous job-related experience as a major employment barrier. Labour market partners cited it as an essential hiring element; hence this element was discussed in detail with the labour market partners that participated in this discussion.

This element attracted differing opinions from participants due to the ambiguousness associated with the definition of the element. Depending on which point of the employment hiring process the element is introduced, some participants defined the element by linking it to job-related knowledge and skills, while some defined it by linking it to the applicant's knowledge and awareness of their organization.

Most employers of skills and knowledge expressed their preferences for job-related experience gained in Canada rather than for job experience gained outside Canada. Their reason for this preference is related to Canadian ethical values and society norms. Their other reasons are that professional practices and standards vary from country to country, hence they would be comfortable if they could measure an applicant's professional development using the Canadian standard which is familiar to the employer.

In some measurable areas they indicated that there shouldn't be any problem accrediting overseas job-related experience obtained in Africa or the Caribbean. University faculty teaching was cited as an area with measurable experience. Experience obtained in African or Caribbean universities may be credited as job-related previous experience in many Canadian universities.

Employers of skills and knowledge in professions such as accounting, engineering, law, medicine, and education prefer previous job experience gained in Canada or the United States for hiring or licensing. These licensing boards emphasized that their policies are based on ethics and standards. For the school board, Canadian culture values and experiences influence hiring of teachers in the school board system.

Entrepreneurship Program

Problems encountered by African Canadian immigrants while trying to establish self-employed businesses or operating self-employed businesses were discussed. The most common problems listed are credit history, capital investment, and business attitudes. Each of these barriers was discussed and advice to overcome these barriers was offered from the point of view of financing institutions and agencies.

Credit History

Credit history is an element used by the banking institutions and loan-granting institutions to determine the past financial performance of an applicant for a loan or equity. The credit history must be developed over time, and must be accessible for verification by the loan granting institutions.

Many African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs came from countries where credit conveys a negative impression of an individual or a business; hence they have no initial interest of establishing their credit history, while in their newly adopted country, Canada, buying or doing business by credit and maintaining a good history conveys a positive impression of an individual or business.

Hence, many immigrants who intend to use external financing to establish their self-employed businesses in Canada must wait until they have established a verifiable credit history. Otherwise they can use other acceptable means such as a combination of equity and a short-term high interest loan to raise the required capital for their business. As a result, many African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs regard credit history as a major barrier to their establishing and operating small and medium-size businesses.

On the other hand, loan-granting institutions regard credit history as a major requirement to loan application consideration and subsequent approval. Loan-granting institutions regard credit history as security, and hence must conduct appropriate verification before granting loans. These institutions' loan policies include the clause "Loans can only be granted to creditworthy customers," and a creditworthy customer can be determined through his/her credit history.

Capital Investment

In businesses, capital can be defined as a function of the applicant's personal financial strength. It represents the amount of funds the entrepreneur is bringing into the business, and the net worth of the business. Many financing institutions require a financial statement of the business with transparent capital investment, for venture capital loans.

Some financing institutions are of the opinion that some African Canadian immigrants and other immigrants are not disposed to understanding the importance of capital investment during loan application and loan granting process. Capital investment can be used as equity to secure a small business loan if the business has no credit history. Our consultation further revealed that an applicant without any credit history could still secure a business loan if a transparent capital investment is pledged as security.

Business Attitudes

Financing institutions and business services agencies cited over-expectation and too much optimism as key issues African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs need to overcome. When too much is expected while too little is available, frustration sets in, resulting in the demise of a good business idea.

Business services agencies and financing institutions were of the opinion that some African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs are well prepared and knowledgeable of what type of business they want to pursue. However, one of the issues is identifying the most optimal way to accomplish their plan.

Some financing institutions claim that, some African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs develop business ideas and concepts that are too ambitious, and financially unstable. Within some of these business ideas, there is no provision for owner's equity in the financial plan; hence they require 100 per cent external financing. As a result, many loan-granting institutions find it difficult to grant business loans to such ventures.

Another issue cited was that some immigrants are overconfident in their ability to pursue a business venture. Some African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs do not attempt to perform basic market research before deciding to pursue their business concept. Some display a high level of certainty in an area of high uncertainty; some never seek professional advice before embarking on a specific business venture. It is very important to research and seek good advice before venturing into business.

Conclusion

Some immigrant entrepreneurs are new arrivals to Canada, and have no credit history with any financing institutions in Canada. Some of these immigrants have personal and business background that dislikes buying or doing business by credit. For them to develop a credit history and be eligible to access those opportunities that inter-link with this element may take quite some time. As a result their desire of starting a self-employed venture will have to wait and may never be realized.

A short-term high interest loan may be the best option to help develop a credit history. This option may be expensive with regards to the interest rate that is attached to it. However, it may be the only option that is available to individuals without previous credit history in Canada.

Business practices in Canada differ significantly from business practices from some immigrants' home countries', it makes good business sense to consult with local small business consultants before starting a self-employed business, or going into partnership.

Some federal and provincial government departments provide some business startup supports to small and medium-size businesses operated by visible minority groups. African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs need to inquire and access those supports before investing their capital into any business ventures. Information regarding these supports can be obtained from the Black Business Initiative (BBI), the Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency (ACOA), Business Development Bank of Canada (BDBC) and many business services centres.

Community Survey

Introduction

The African Canadian immigrant community of Nova Scotia is endowed with an educated and talented population. The community is literate, and many members of the community have the required skills and knowledge to participate equitably in the labour market. This notwithstanding, under-employment and unemployment rates in the community are high compared to the national and the provincial rates.

The Job Search Experience, on page 80, lists five elements of the labour market framework that influences employment trends were discussed by the focus groups. The structuring and use of these elements by employers sometimes constitute participation denial, access denial and discrimination. In some cases, employers' negative attitudes may be intentional, while in some other cases, it may be systemic in nature.

As a result of the foregoing, a survey of the African Canadian immigrant community with a structured questionnaire that seeks their opinion on three major areas: demography, awareness and usage of programs, and attitudes and opinions was conducted. The demography section seeks respondent opinions on nine demography-related issues. The awareness and usage section seeks respondents opinions on four main programs issues, while the attitudes and opinions sections seeks respondents opinions on twenty-five issues of concern.

The global objective of the survey is to measure the level of satisfaction within the community with regard to five employment variables of concern, namely, job search process satisfaction, job search process dissatisfaction, employment hiring satisfaction, employment discrimination and dissatisfaction, and need for greater program awareness.

One hundred and forty questionnaires were distributed to randomly identified members of the African Canadian immigrant community. Twenty per cent, of these questionnaires were distributed to African Canadian immigrants residing outside Halifax Regional Municipality, while eighty per cent, of the questionnaires were distributed to African Canadian immigrants residing in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

Within the time limit set by the consultants, respondents returned one hundred of these questionnaires. The province-wide participation rate for the survey was high, 71.43%. Obviously, the survey was well received by the community, hence we claim that the research project objective was also well received by the community. Eighty-six of the returned questionnaires were valid for our statistical analysis, while 14 of the responses were rejected by our screening process.

The following sections of this chapter present the results of the analysis and subsequent discussions.

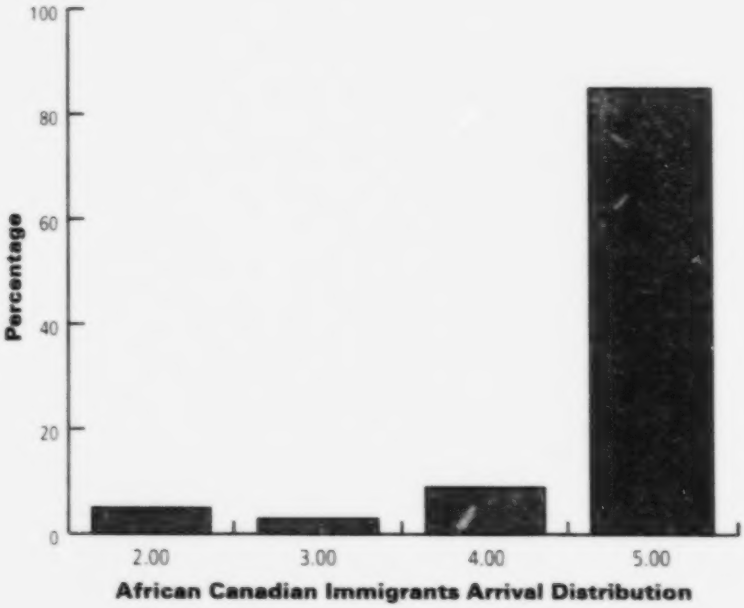
Demographic Information

The objective of this section is to develop descriptive statistics that are essential for understanding the African Canadian immigrant community employment issues that are related to demography. Another objective is to uncover any systematic trends and any correlation between demography and employers' attitudes toward the African Canadian immigrant community. The reporting format adapted for this section is as follows: after each problem statement appropriate descriptive statistics are presented followed by discussions and implications where necessary.

Question 1, Time of Arrival

Identify the time that has lapsed since you arrived first in Canada. (1) Arrived less than six months ago, (2) arrived 6–12 months ago, (3) arrived 1–2 years ago, (4) arrived 2–4 years ago, (5) arrived more than 4 years ago.

Figure 4.1
African Canadian Immigrants Arrival Distribution



The bar chart plots the percentage frequency as a function of arrival period. From Figure 4.1, 87.2 per cent of the population arrived in Canada more than four years ago, 7.0 per cent of the population arrived less than four years ago, 2.3 per cent less than two years ago, while 3.5 per cent arrived less than one year ago.

From Figure 4.1 the mean of the distribution is 4.78 which is close to 5.0, that is, equal to arrived more than four years ago, the median is 5.0, and the mode is 5.0. The distribution kurtosis is +10.45, an indication that most of the data clusters around the mean. It may be concluded that most African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia arrived more than four years ago.

Question 2, Status on Arrival

Did you arrive in Canada as, (1) Student, (2) Temporary worker, (3), Investor/Entrepreneur, (4) Immigrant, (5) Refugee, (6) Family Class (dependent)?

Figure 4.2
African Canadian Immigrants Status Distribution

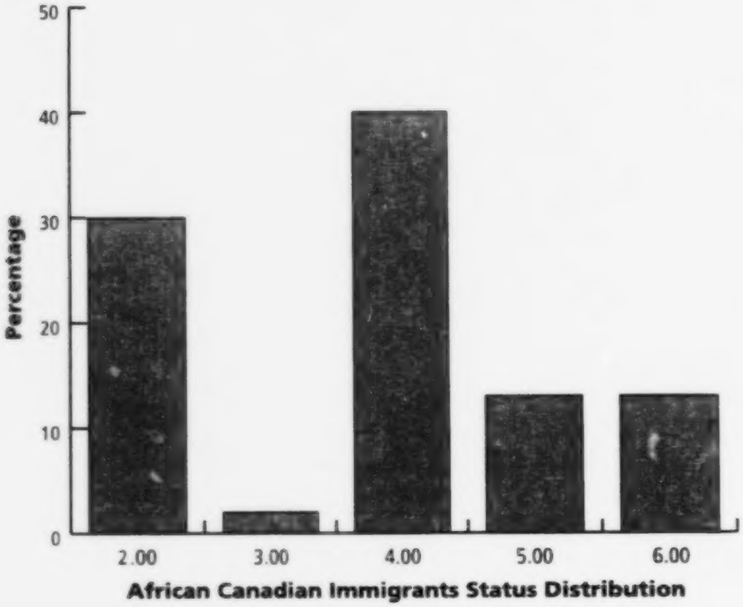


Figure 4.2 indicates that 38.8% of the population arrived as Immigrants, 30.6% arrived as students, 14.1% arrived as refugee, and 14.1% arrived under family class, while 2.4% arrived as entrepreneurs.

From Figure 4.2, the mean of the distribution is 3.48, the median is 4.0, and the mode is 4.0. The percentage frequency distribution kurtosis is -1.25, an indication that the data clusters less around the mean. It may be concluded that most of the African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia arrived as immigrants.

Question 3, Attitudes and Opinions

To track geographic influence on immigrants' attitudes and opinions, their entry point needs to be established. Hence, the question: Was Nova Scotia your first destination in Canada? (0) equals no, (1) equals Yes. If response is No, (1) for entry through BC, (2) through Saskatchewan,
(3) through Alberta, (4) through Manitoba, (5) through Ontario, (6) through Quebec,
(7) through New Brunswick, (8) through Nova Scotia.

Figure 4.3
African Canadian Immigrants Destination Distribution

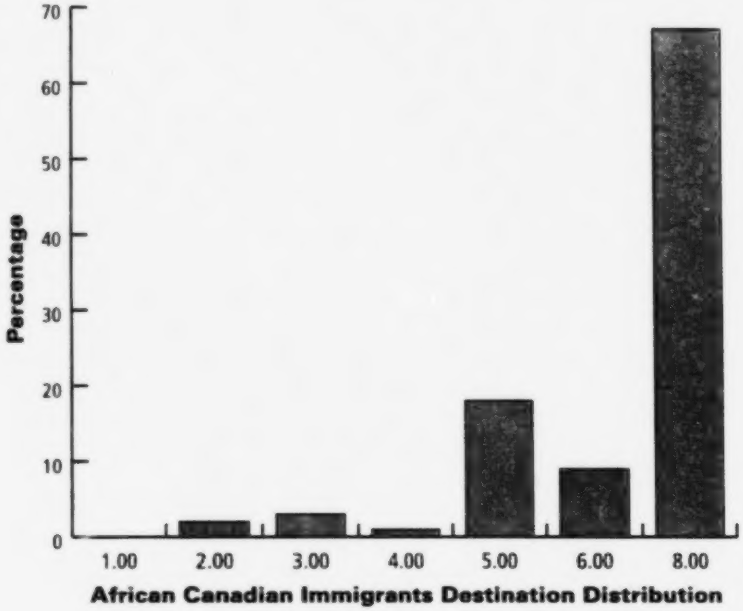


Figure 4.3 indicates that 66.3% of the population arrived in Canada through Nova Scotia, while 33.7% arrived first to other provinces before migrating to Nova Scotia. Figure 4.3 indicates that 16.9% of the population migrated from Ontario, 7.2% migrated from Quebec, 3.6% migrated from Alberta, and 1.2% migrated from Manitoba, while 2.4% migrated respectively from British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

Table 4.1
Destination Analysis

Legend	Id	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Median	Mode
Other Provinces	0.0	27	33.7			
Nova Scotia	1.0	56	66.3			
Statistics				6.81	8.0	8.0

From Figure 4.3 and Table 4.1, the mean of the distribution is 6.8, the median is 8.0, and the mode is 8.0, hence it may be concluded that most African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia arrived in Canada through Nova Scotia.

Question 5, Education and Employment Status of Household Members 18 and Over:

Highest education level attained by household members 18 and above: (0.0) indicates did not complete high school, (1.0) indicates completed high school, (2.0) indicates diploma, and/or undergraduate degree, (3.0) indicates Masters degree, (4.0) indicates PhD.

Figure 4.4a
African Canadian Immigrants' Adult Male Qualification Distribution

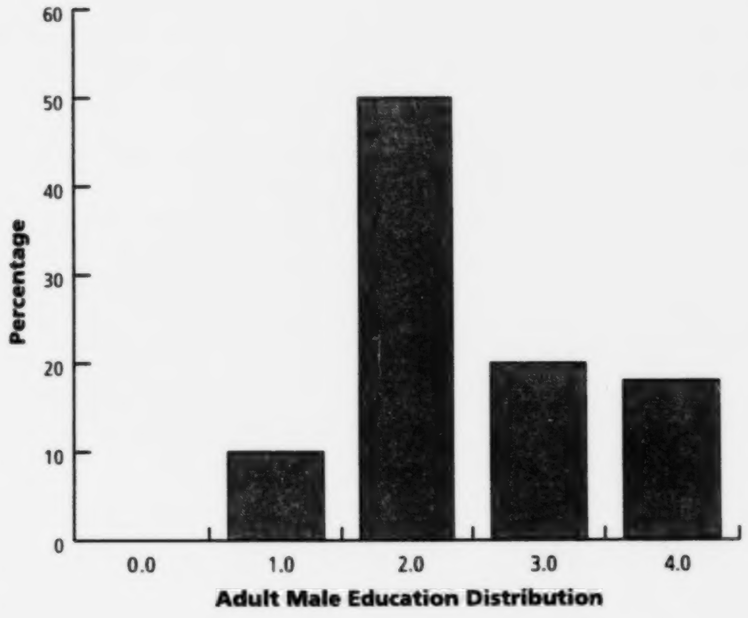
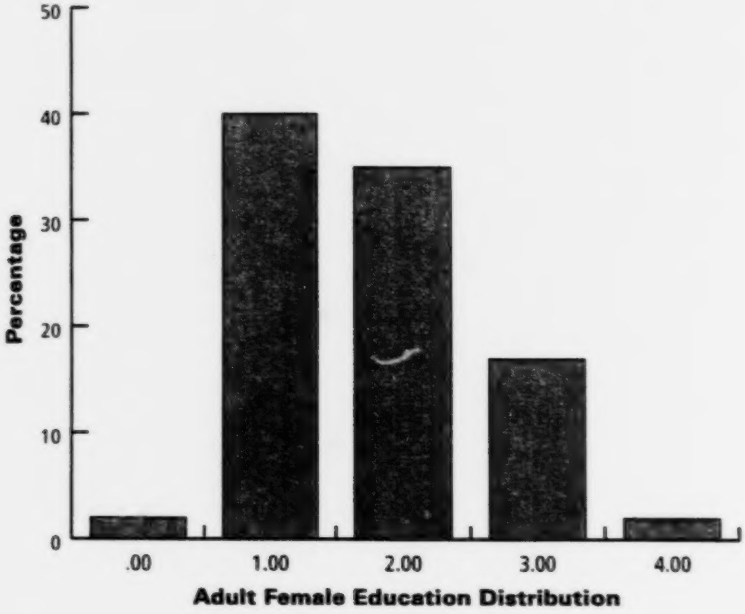


Table 4.2a
Educational Training of Adult Male

Legend	Id	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Median	Mode
> High School	0.0	1	1.7			
High School	1.0	5	8.6			
University/College	2.0	29	50.0			
Masters Degree	3.0	12	20.7			
PhD	4.0	11	19.0			
Statistics				2.50	2.0	2.0

Figure 4.4a and Table 4.2a, indicates a median qualification of the male heads of the household for the population to be college diploma or undergraduate degree. Figure 4.4b and Table 4.2b, indicates a median qualification of female heads of the household to be an undergraduate degree or a college diploma.

Figure 4.4b
African Canadian Immigrant Adult Female Qualification Distribution



The most frequently occurring or the mode qualification of the male heads of the household, is an undergraduate degree. For the female heads of the household, the mode qualification is a high school diploma.

Table 4.2b
Educational Training of Adult Females

Legend	Id	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Median	Mode
> High School	0.0	1	2.0			
High School	1.0	21	42.0			
University/College	2.0	18	36.0			
Masters Degree	3.0	9	18.0			
PhD	4.0	1	2.0			
Statistics				1.76	2.0	1.0

It is interesting to observe that 80.2% of the adult males in the African immigrant community are educated above high school diploma. 20.7% of the adult males are educated at the Master's degree level, while 9.5% are educated at the PhD's level. Among females, 36% are educated above high school diploma, 18.0% are educated at Master's degree level, while 2.0% are educated at the PhD level.

Also, 64.7% of the adult males in the African immigrant community attained their highest education in Canada, while 35.3% attained their highest education outside Canada. For the adult female, 41.5% attained their highest education in Canada, while 25.6% attained their highest education outside Canada.

The survey indicated that the African Canadian Immigrant community is highly literate; this result is correct. Many African Canadian Immigrants came to Canada as students to pursue higher education, and Nova Scotia has a high concentration of tertiary institutions, hence the attraction of highly qualified African Canadian immigrants.

Secondly, Nova Scotia's biggest city, Halifax, has a modest population, and is home to eight universities and several community colleges, hence the high concentration of African Canadian Immigrants in Halifax Regional Municipality. The survey indicated that 30.6% of African Canadian immigrants arrived in Nova Scotia as students, while 38.8% arrived as immigrants.

Thirdly, new immigrants, mostly of African origin, are required to have the skills and knowledge necessary to secure employment in Canada. Many African Canadian immigrants normally arrive in Canada with educational training above a high school diploma. In the light of the foregoing, our finding appears to be realistic.

Employment Status of Family Members 18 and Over

The survey indicated that the actual unemployment rate among male African Canadian immigrants is 21.0% shown in Figure 4.5a and Table 4.3a, and for female African Canadian immigrants, the unemployment rate is 25.8%, shown in Figure 4.5b and Table 4.3b.

Figure 4.5a
African Canadian Immigrants Adult Male Employment Profile

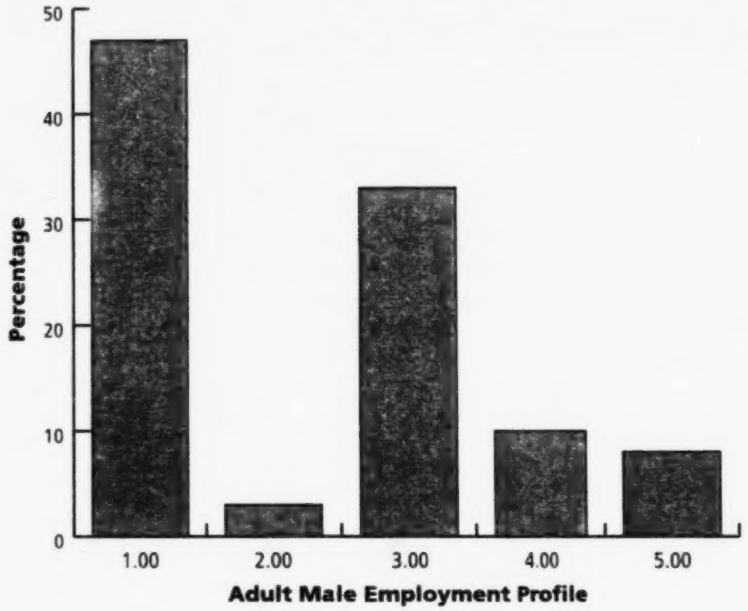


Table 4.3a
Adult Male Employment Status

Legend	Id	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Median	Mode
Full-time	1.0	30	46.2			
Part-time	2	0	2 3.1			
Self-employed	3.0	22	33.8			
Unemployed	4.0	6	9.2			
Currently in School	5.0	5	7.7			
Statistics			2.29	3.0	1.0	

For adult male members of the African Canadian immigrant community, 46.2% are employed full-time, 33.8% are self-employed and/or under-employed, 9.2% are unemployed, and 7.7% have returned to school to improve their education. Over one third of the self-employed members of the African Canadian immigrant community are practically unemployed. Hence, the actual percentage of unemployed male African Canadian immigrants is 21.0%.

Figure 4.5b
African Canadian Immigrants Adult Female Employment Profile

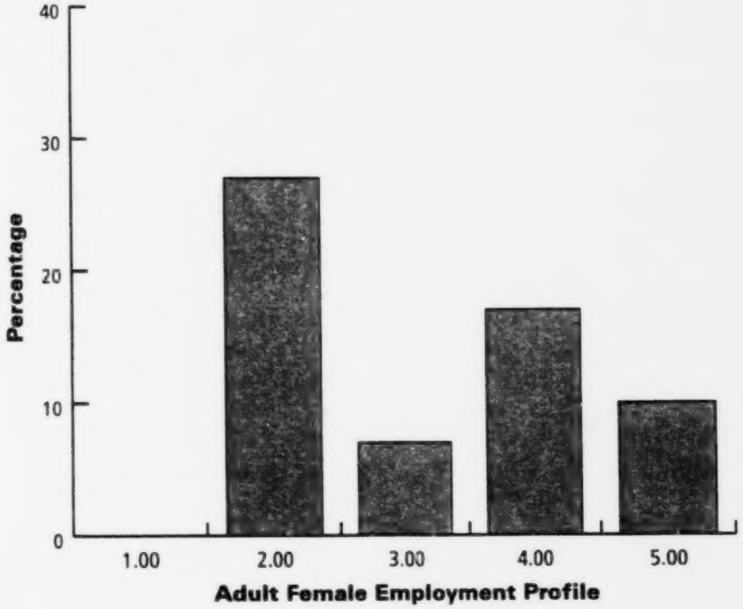


Table 4.3b
Adult Female Employment Status

Legend	Id	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Median	Mode
Full-time	1.0	22	37.9			
Part-time	2.0	16	27.6			
Self-employed	3.0	5	8.6			
Unemployed	4.0	9	15.5			
Currently in School	5.0	6	10.3			
Statistics				2.33	2.0	1.0

For adult female members of the community, 37.9% are employed full-time, 27.6% are employed part-time, 15.5% are unemployed, 10.3% are unemployed but in school to improve their education. Hence the actual percentage of unemployed female African Canadian immigrants is 25.8%.

The survey indicates that more adult females, 28.3%, are employed part-time than adult males, 3.1%, while more adults males (33.8%) are self-employed than adult females (8.6%). It is necessary to point out that the high number of self-employed adult males mainly reflects lack of employment in their area of expertise.

Many of these self-employed adult males own businesses in areas outside their specialization, hence, most are under-employed. Some of these entrepreneurs indicated their willingness to quit their self-employed business if a job is secured in their area of training.

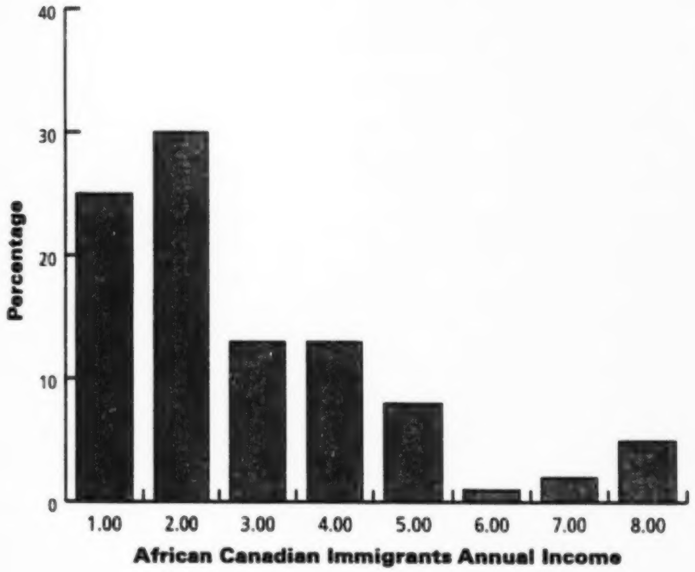
Question 7, Household Income

The gross annual household income is a strategic variable that helps to define economic performance of individual, family and community. We used it in this survey to measure parity and disparity in income within the African Canadian immigrant community.

Respondents were asked to indicate their annual household income within eight pre-determined categories, (1) below $15,000, (2) $15,001-$20,000, (3) $20,001-$35,000, (4) $35,001-$50,000,
(5) $50,001-$65,000, (6) $65,001-$80,000, (7) $80,001-$95,000, and (8) $95,001 and above.

The survey indicated that most African Canadian immigrants' annual household income is between $15,000 and $20,000; however, the average annual household income for the community is between $20,000 and $35,000, Figure 4.6 and Table 4.4.

Figure 4.6
African Canadian Immigrants Average Annual Household Income



The survey further indicated that the median annual household income for the African Canadian Immigrants is $20,000.

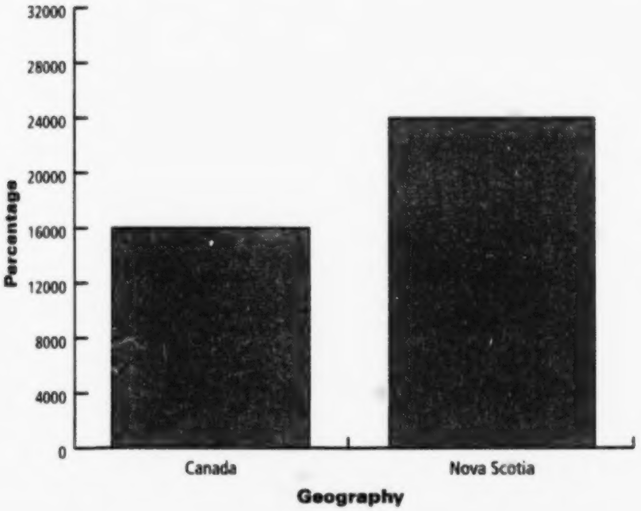
Table 4.4
Annual Household Income

Legend	Id	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Median	Mode
Other Provinces	0.0	27	33.7			
>$15,000	1.0	17	25.0			
$15,001-$20K	2.0	21	30.9			
$20,001-$35K	3.0	9	13.2			
$35,001-$50K	4.0	9	13.2			
$50,001-$60K	5.0	5	7.4			
$60,001-$80K	6.0	1	1.5			
$80,001-$95K	7.0	2	2.9			
>$95,001	8.0	4	5.9			
Statistics				3.0	2.0	2.0

It is interesting to observe the significant difference between education and family income of African Canadian immigrants. Eighty point two percent of adult males in the community are educated beyond high school diploma, while 55.9 percent of this population earn less than $20,000 annually. A possible interpretation of this disparity is under-employment.

Under-employment may be indicated because the average education for the community did not correspond with average annual household income for the community. The average annual household income distribution kurtosis is +.85, an indication of clustering around the median income. Hence it may be concluded that most African Canadian immigrants' annual household income is less than $20,000.

Figure 4.7
African Canadian Immigrants Average Annual Income



The 1996 Census Canada data Figure 4.7 list single family average annual income for African Canadian immigrants residing in Nova Scotia to be $23,638. It also lists the annual median income for African Canadian immigrants residing in Nova Scotia to be $15,508. Our finding from this survey appears to collaborate with their results.

This survey lists the average annual household income for African Canadian immigrants to be $20,000-$35,000, while the median annual household income for African Canadian immigrants is between $15,000 and $20,000. The two results appear to agree with minor adjustments.

Question 8, Type of Household Employment

Respondents were asked to indicate the nature of employment held by the highest income earner in the family.

This variable aimed to establish a relationship between the income earned by the highest income earner in relation to the current employment.

Figure 4.8 displays the type of employment held by the highest income earner in the African Canadian immigrant family.

Figure 4.8
African Canadian Immigrants Occupation Profile

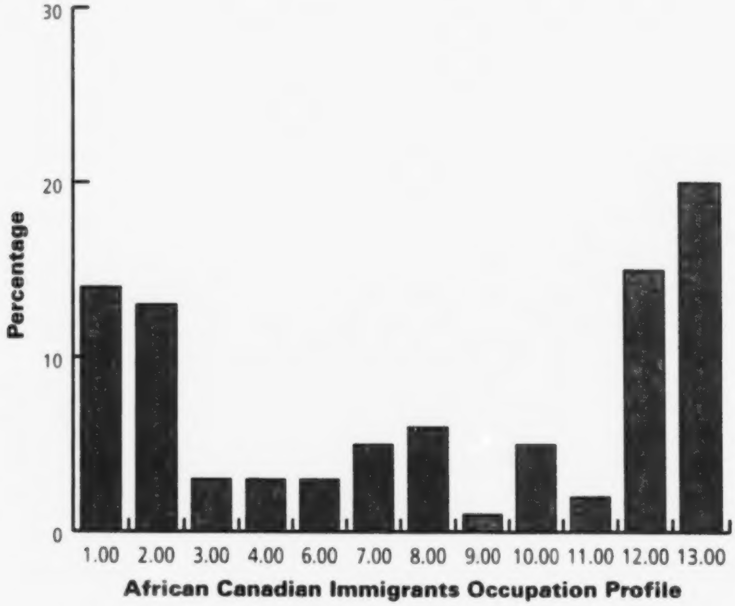


Table 4.5 lists the nature of employment and the associated descriptive statistics.

Table 4.5
Nature of Employment

Legend	Id	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Median	Mode
Artisan, Craftsman, other Skilled Worker	1.0	9	12.9			
Teaching (University/ College/School)	2.0	8	11.4			
Engineer	3.0	3	4.3			
Lawyer or Accountant	4.0	3	4.3			
Construction Worker	5.0	0	0.0			
Social Worker	6.0	3	4.3			
Clerical	7.0	5	7.1			
Managerial/Supervisory	8.0	6	8.6			
Physician	9.0	1	1.4			
Consultant	10.0	5	7.1			
Healthcare Worker	11.0	2	2.9			
Unskilled Worker	12.0	10	14.3			
Other	13.0	15	21.4			
Statistics				7.76	8.0	13.0

As shown in Figure 4.8 and Table 4.5, a cumulative 51.4% of the employed African Canadian immigrants were employed in the listed professions, 12.9% are employed as skilled workers, 14.3% are employed as unskilled workers, while 21.4% are employed in other unlisted areas. The high frequency associated with variable (13) result is due to many African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs identifying their nature of employment within this variable.

Further analysis of the employment variables indicated that 11.4% of the population are employed in the teaching profession, 4.3% are employed in the engineering profession and 4.3% are employed in the law and accounting profession. While 4.3% are employed as social workers, 7.1% are employed as clerical workers, 8.6% are employed as managers or supervisors, 1.4% are employed in the medical profession, 7.1% are employed as consultants and 2.9% are employed as healthcare workers.

The average annual household income from this survey is between $20,000 and $35,000, while the survey indicates that 51.4% cumulative are employed in jobs that pay between $20,000 and over $95,000. Hence it is expected that the mean annual household income for the population should have been a little above $45,000.

Hence it can be concluded that African Canadian Immigrants experience some kind of disparity in income and in the workplace.

Employers of Skills and Knowledge

The survey indicated, as shown in Figure 4.9 and Table 4.6, that the public service, civil service and other government organizations are the largest employers of African Canadian immigrants in the labour market.

Figure 4.9
Employers of African Canadian Immigrants

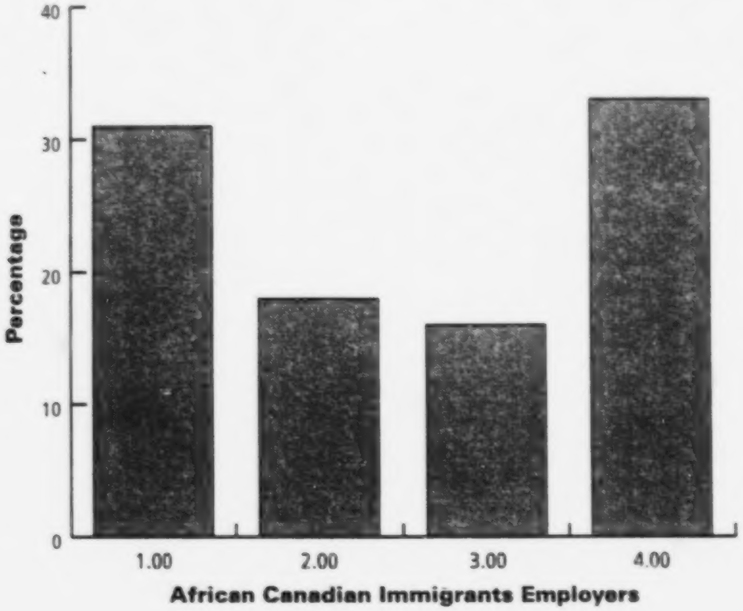


Table 4.6
African Canadian Immigrants Employers Distribution

Legend	Id	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Median	Mode
Government	1	23	31.5			
Non-Government Organization	2	13	17.8			
Private Sector	3	12	16.4			
Self-Employed	4	25	34.2			
Statistics				2.53	3.0	4.0

Thirty one point five percent of employed African Canadian Immigrants are employed by one form of government or its agencies. Seventeen point eight percent are employed by non-governmental organizations, while 16.4 percent are employed in the private sector.

It is interesting to note that 20.3 percent of African Canadian immigrants are involved in some form of self-employment. The majority are university graduates in the cab-driving industry. Many of these entrepreneurs expressed their willingness to quit their self-employed businesses if they were able to obtain employment in their area of training, or in a related area.

Obviously these African Canadian immigrants are underemployed, under-utilized and underpaid. Some of these entrepreneurs earn less than $20,000 annually; hence they may require Total Economic Rehabilitation (TER).

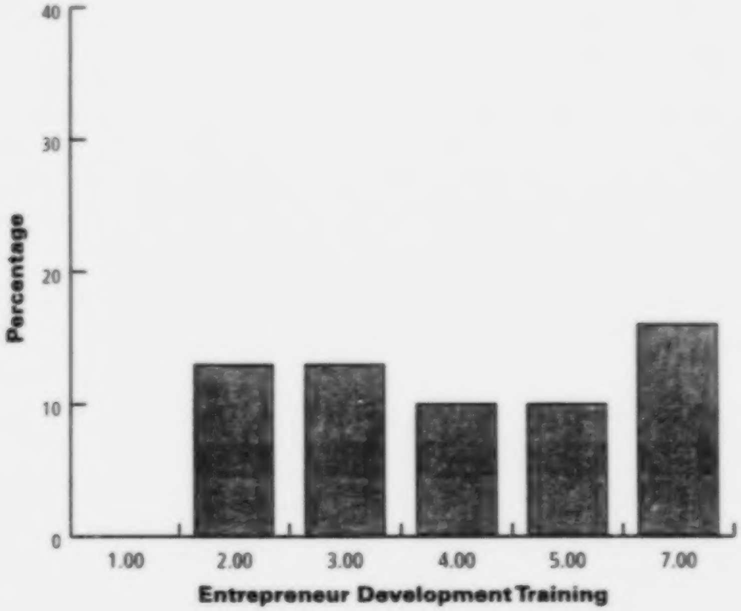
Question 9.3, Entrepreneur Development Program

African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs were asked to indicate training that may help enhance their entrepreneurship skills and knowledge. They indicated (1) marketing/promotion, (2) accounting/finance, (3) sales, (4) exports, (5) customer relations, (6) business plan, and (7) other than the indicated six basic areas of business developmental training.

Table 4.7
African Canadian Immigrant Entrepreneur Training Distribution

Legend	Id	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Median	Mode
Marketing/Promotion	1	11	36.7			
Accounting/Finance	2	4	13.3			
Sales	3	4	13.3			
Exports	4	3	10.0			
Customer Relations	5	3	10.0			
Other	7	5	16.7			
Statistics				3.1	2.5	1.0

Figure 4.10
Entrepreneurship Development Training



From Figure 4.10 and Table 4.7, it is obvious that 36.7% of the self-employed African Canadian immigrants will benefit from training in marketing and promotion, 13.3%will benefit from training in accounting/finance and sales, 10% will benefit from training in export and customer relations, while 16.7% will benefit from training in other areas.

Marketing and promotion of their businesses appears to be the area where most African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs are experiencing difficulties. Although many other non-African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs experience similar difficulties, non-African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs have greater awareness and access to government services available to small and medium size businesses.

Some African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs are aware of some of these government services for small businesses, while some are not. Some of these service providers have a subliminal presence in the African Canadian immigrant community, hence their visibility needs to be increased. The suggested increase in their presence will help create better awareness, improve networking and create better access to programs.

Awareness and Usage of Programs

The African Canadian immigrant community continues to feel that systemic discrimination has denied the community the opportunity to participated fully in the civic and economic activities in Nova Scotia. The community insisted that awareness of programs make no sense if access to programs is systemically denied.

The service-related issues discussed in this section cover some of the services that are customarily provided by HRDC and other government agencies such as Business Development Bank of Canada (BDBC), Black Business Initiative (BBI), Metropolitan Immigrants Settlement Association (MISA), Charter Banks, African Canadian Employment Clinic (ACEC) etc.

Questions, Awareness and Use of HRDC Programs

Respondents were asked to indicate their awareness and usage of the following programs and services offered by Human Resources Development Canada.

- Human Resources Investment (HRI)—initiative for visible minority groups, aboriginal people, people with disabilities and EI clients
- Job Search Skills (JSS)—information on job search strategies and skills
- Training and Education Information (TEI)—information on colleges and universities, private trade school training
- Entrepreneurship (ENTREP)—accessing suitability for Entrepreneurship
- HRDC web sites on labour market information

The survey indicates that 41.7% of the African Canadian immigrant community are aware of the HRI program, while 58.3% are not aware of the program. Sixty point three percent of those that are aware of the HRI program have not used the program. Hence this program needs to be more visible in the community. HRDC should provide more access to this program for the African Canadian immigrant community. We propose a partnership with the community as a possible avenue to increase presence and create more program awareness and usage.

For the JSS service, 67.1% of the population are aware of the service, while 32.9% are not aware of the service. For the JSS service, over 65% of those that are aware of the JSS service were very critical of the current format, while some of them indicated that they were not satisfied outright with the level of service offered.

For the TEI program, 60.8% are aware of the program, while 39.2% are not aware of the program. For the ENTREP service, 46.8% of the population are aware of the program, while 53.2 % are not aware of the program. Hence the ENTREP program needs to be more visible in the community.

For the HRDC web site, 49.4% of the population are aware of this site, while 50.6% of the population are not aware of this site. Efforts should be made to increase the awareness of the community towards programs and services provided by HRDC.

The survey indicates that African Canadian immigrants are aware of JSS and TEI programs, but our analysis of the Kurtosis of these distributions indicated that many African Canadian immigrants that are aware of these programs could not gain access to these programs. African Canadian immigrants expressed dissatisfaction with the TEI program requirements. To be eligible, participants must be eligible EI recipients who have a current EI claim or have been in receipt of EI benefits in the last three years. This essential element of the TEI program applies to every Canadian. Many African Canadian immigrants were concerned about this element of the program. They felt that this element excludes new immigrants, and results in denial of access to the program.

Recommendation

We strongly recommend enhanced visibility of HRDC within the African Canadian immigrant community. The recommended visibility should include enhanced community outreach, and community information sessions on HRDC programs. Secondly, HRDC, in partnership with the African Canadian immigrant community could develop a community partnership that will encourage organizations advocating on behalf of African Canadian immigrants to develop programs that will benefit the community and the society at large.

Attitudes and Opinions

This section seeks the opinions of members of the African Canadian immigrant community on fifteen employment variables. These variables aim to uncover lack of access to employment, employer attitudes and a labour market that is often discriminatory and contributes to employment disparity and access denial.

Factor analysis was performed on these fifteen employment variables. This analytical technique requires identifying underlying variables, or factors, that explain the pattern of correlation within a set of observed variables. The technique identified five factors for the fifteen employment variables, namely:

- job search process satisfaction
- job search process dissatisfaction
- employment hiring satisfaction
- employment discrimination and dissatisfaction
- need for greater program awareness

The following sub-sections present the results of our factor analysis of the fifteen employment variables. Att is an icon used to represent Attitude, hence Att15 stands for Attitude question number 15, etc. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the appendix.

Factor 1, Employment Fairness and Satisfaction

Factor 1 grouped together variables Att15, Att14, Att12, Att9, and Att7. These variables are related to employment fairness and satisfaction.

From the factor analysis, it can be concluded that some employed African Canadian immigrants are satisfied with their current employment, while most are not. Secondly, employed African Canadian immigrants feel that hiring and promotion practices are marginally fair in their present employment, and that their employers provide them opportunities for job-related or other training.

Further analysis indicates that some employed African Canadian Immigrants agree that, their current employment matched their educational training, and that promotion opportunities are based on their performance alone. The self-employed African Canadian immigrants indicated that their current employment does not match their educational training.

It is important to point out that the employed African Canadian immigrants referred to by this factor are those employed outside the private sector.

Factor 2, Employment Discrimination and Dissatisfaction

Factor 2 grouped together variables Att13, Att11, and Att8. These variables are related to Employment discrimination and dissatisfaction.

African Canadian immigrants generally feel strongly that they have not received the same access to training as some of their co-workers. Employed members of the African Canadian immigrant community marginally agreed that further training in their current job would not be of any benefit to them. However, they feel that their race may be a barrier for promotion and progress in their current employment.

Att 13 of Factor 2 and Att 12 of Factor 1 may need some clarification. Factor 1 indicates that the employed African Canadian immigrants agreed that training opportunities exist in their current employment. However, Factor 2 indicated a certain level of disparity in the training process.

Further analysis of these factors revealed that the employer may provide training opportunities, but accessing these opportunities by African Canadian immigrants is not easy. Possibly, they witness some co-workers nominated more often to attend training, without them being given the same opportunities. Hence they are of the opinion that they do not have the same access to training as their co-workers.

Factor 3, Examine the Opinion of African Canadian Immigrants that used Assistance Programs Offered by HRDC and Other Agencies

Factor 3 grouped together variables Att4, Att3, and Att1. These variables are related to job search process satisfaction.

The majority of African Canadian immigrants in this group used assistance programs offered by HRDC and other government departments and agencies during their job search. They also indicated that they did not experience any discrimination when they were searching for jobs. Also this group of African Canadian immigrants felt that they received the necessary assistance from government agencies and departments during their job search.

Our further analysis of Att3 with regards to the African Canadian immigrant community suggested that there might be no open discrimination against them during their job search. However, they experienced systemic discrimination as a result of their race. The weak correlation for Att4 suggested that they may not have equitable access to some of the assistance programs or that they may not be aware of some of these programs.

Factor 4, Job Search Process Dissatisfaction

Factor 4 grouped together variables Att5 and Att2. These variables are related to job search process dissatisfaction.

Most African Canadian immigrants agreed that they were not aware of the government services available to immigrants and visible minority groups during their job search. Most African Canadian immigrants felt that some opportunities were denied to them because of their race.

Att2 collaborated with the further analysis implication for Att3. Again Att2 implied discrimination experience as a result of racial origin, and our further analysis of Att3 confirmed this attitude of employers.

Factor 5, Greater Program Awareness

Factor 5 grouped together variables Att10 and Att6. These variables are related to need for greater program awareness.

Most African Canadian immigrants think that greater awareness should be created for government services and programs aimed at African Canadian immigrants and visible minority groups. Most African Canadian immigrants experienced serious difficulties in finding employment when they first arrived in Canada.

Self-Employed

This section seeks the opinions of self-employed African Canadian immigrants on ten entrepreneurship-related variables. These variables aim to uncover entrepreneurship issues that identify strongly with discrimination and access denial to programs and services.

Factor analysis was not performed on the self-employment variables due to limited number of self-employed African Canadian immigrants. However, frequency and descriptive statistics were used to analyze opinions expressed by these immigrants. In Figures 4.11–4.20, the following legend was used to develop the bar chart:

- (0.0) No Opinion
- (1.0) Strongly Disagree
- (2.0) Disagree
- (3.0) Middle Opinion
- (4.0) Agree
- (5.0) Strongly Agree

Question 16, Business Setup

Did you have any great difficulty in establishing your business?

As high as 72% of the African Canadian immigrant business community indicated that they had great difficulty in establishing their business, while 28% indicated they had no problem establishing their business.

Figure 4.11
Business Startup Difficulty

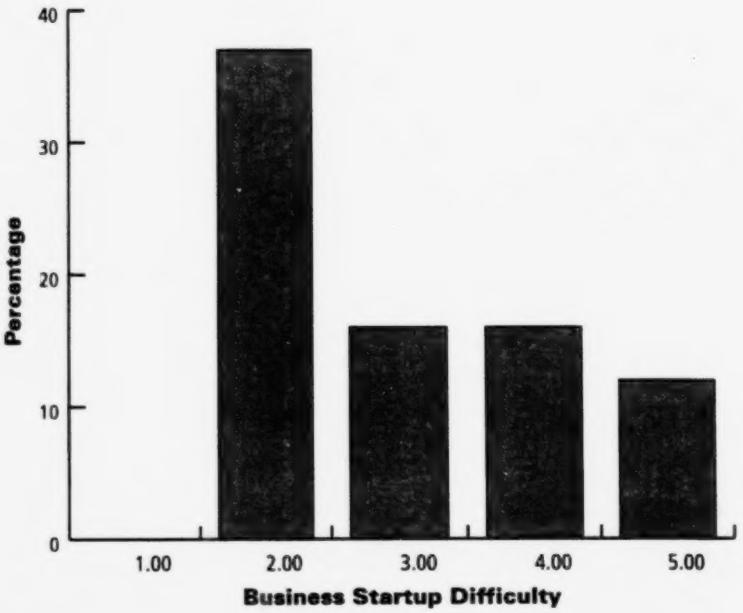


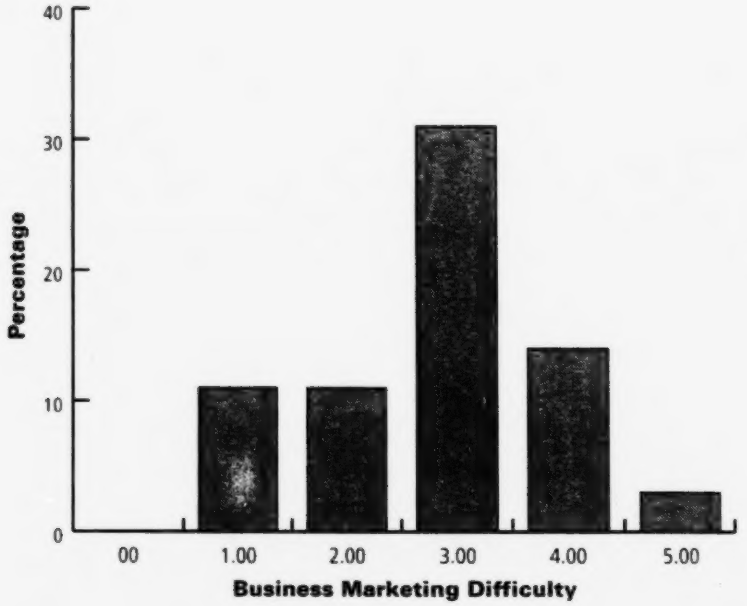
Figure 4.11, is uni-modal, the median and the mode are both at 2.0, which implies a result of "disagree", while the mean is at 2.6, less that 3.0. Hence it can be concluded that African Canadian Immigrants have great difficulties in establishing their various businesses.

Question 17, Business Patrons

Do you experience any problem getting customers to patronize your business?

About 32 percent of the African Canadian immigrant business community responded marginally to this variable. However 24 percent cumulative disagree with this variable, and 24 percent indicated no opinion, while 20 percent cumulative indicated they have no problem attracting customers to their business (see Figure 4.12). Hence, it may be concluded that African Canadian immigrants have little problem attracting customers to patronize their business.

Figure 4.12
Business Marketing Difficulty



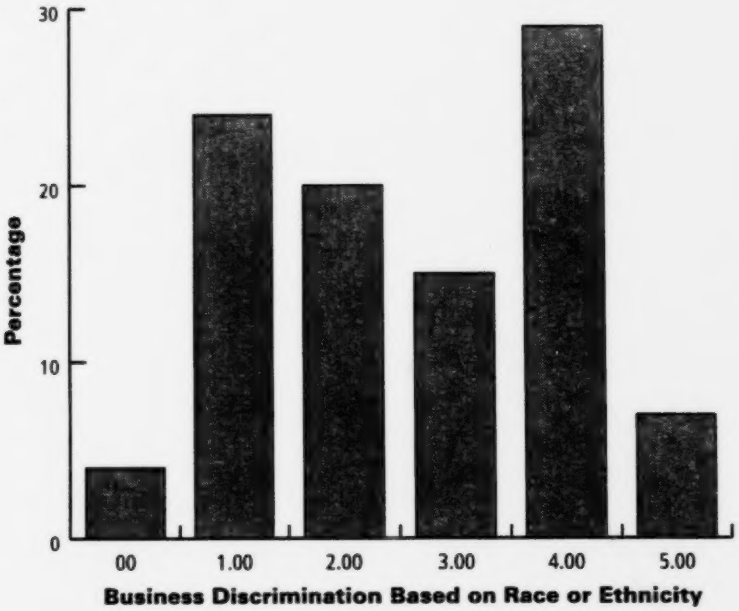
The implication here is that failures by African Canadian immigrants in self-employed ventures have little to do with their potential to attracting patrons. This presumption may not be true for some highly specialized ventures. For professional ventures, African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs do experience some kind of patronage discrimination, mostly by provincial government and its agencies. Unlike their counterparts from the mainstream, African Canadian immigrant consultants are denied opportunities even though they are highly qualified. Subliminal issues are used to back up the discrimination.

Question 18, Race or Ethnicity Barrier

Do you think race or ethnicity is a barrier to succeeding in your business?

About 36% cumulative of the business community think race and ethnicity is not a barrier to succeeding in their business, while 44% cumulative think race or ethnicity is a barrier to succeeding in their business. Sixteen % marginally think race and ethnicity is a barrier.

Figure 4.13
Business Discriminations Based on Race or Ethnicity



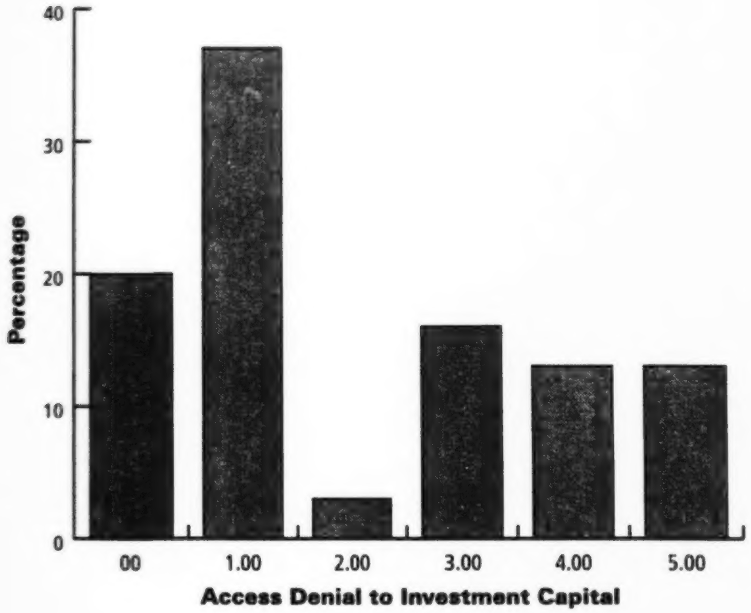
From Figure 4.13, the mean of the distribution is 2.64, or approximately 3, marginally agreed, while the median is 3 marginally agreed, and the mode is 4 agreed. Analysis of the distribution kurtosis shows high level of dispersion. It may be concluded that race or ethnicity may be a barrier to African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs.

Question 19, Financial Institutions

Were financial institutions generally helpful to you?

About 40% cumulative of the business community indicated that financial institutions were not generally helpful to them, while, 24% cumulative agreed that financial institutions were generally helpful to them. Twenty per cent indicated no opinion, while 16% indicated marginal opinion.

Figure 4.14
Access Denial to Capital Funds



From Figure 4.14, the mode is 1, strongly disagree. The median is also 1, strongly disagree, while the mean is 2, disagree. It can be concluded that most African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs feel that financial institutions generally are not helpful to them.

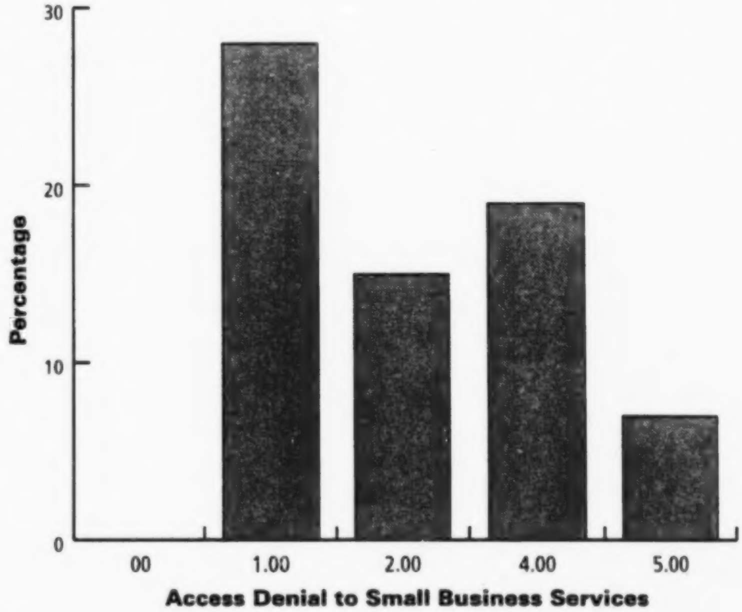
Most African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs experience some degree of difficulty in obtaining business loans from most financial institutions. Our analysis revealed that some of the difficulties experienced by African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs may be as a result of lack of information with regard to loan requirements. On the other hand, some financial institutions have some misconception about African Canadian immigrants in general.

Question 20, Government Services for Small Businesses

Did you make/have you made good use of government services for small businesses?

About 44% cumulative of the African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs indicated that they did not make/have made good use of government services for small businesses. Twenty-eight % cumulative agreed that they did not make/have made good use of government services for small businesses, while 28% indicated no opinion to this variable.

Figure 4.15
Access Denial to Government Services for Small Businesses



From Figure 4.15, the mean 1.8 is approximately 2.0, disagree; the median is 1.0, strongly disagree, while the mode is 1.0, strongly disagree. Hence it may be concluded that African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs did not make good use of government service for small businesses.

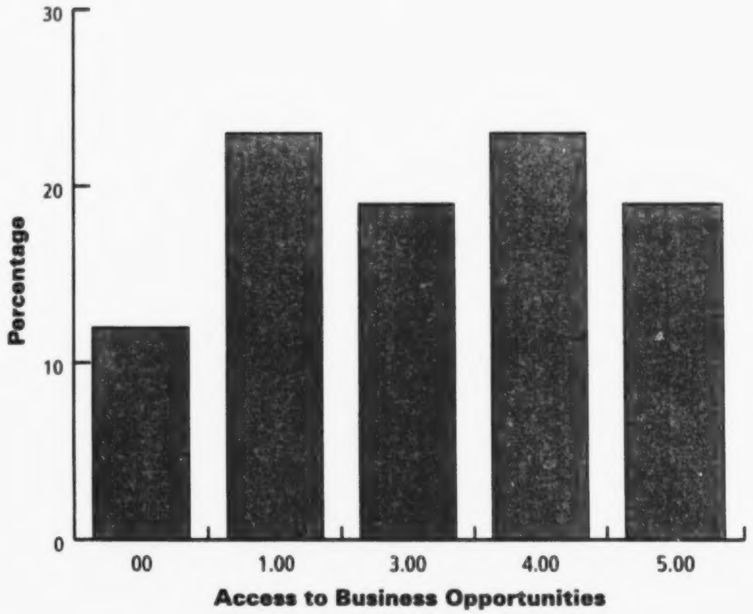
This survey shows that some African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs do not make any efforts to access government programs and services for small businesses due to perceived systemic discrimination. Hence we recommend improved public relations, greater access to information from agencies and departments providing small business programs and services. This may improve the business relation between these agencies and immigrant entrepreneurs.

Question 21, Fair Competition

As a minority business owner, I have not had any problems competing fairly.

About 24% of the African Canadian immigrant business community agreed that the competition in the market place is fair, while 24% of the business community think that the competition is not fair. Twenty per cent marginally think that the competition is not fair. Another 20% of the business community strongly agreed that the competition is fair.

Figure 4.16
Access To Market Problem



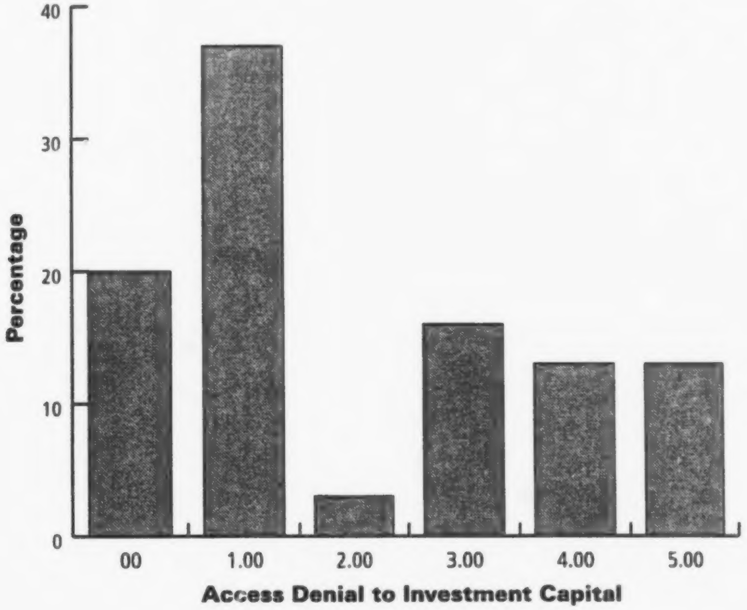
From Figure 4.16, the mean is 2.8, approximately 3.0 marginally agree; the median is 3.0; and the mode is 1.0 strongly disagreed, and 4.0 equals agree. The Figure shows that 44% cumulative of the business community agreed that the competition is fair. Hence it may be concluded that the majority of the African Canadian business community agreed that the competition in the marketplace is fair.

Question 22, Securing Employment

You started your business because you were unsuccessful in securing employment.

56% cumulative of the African Canadian business community started their business as a result of lack of success in securing employment in their area of specialization or related area. Twenty-eight per cent cumulative started their business out of choice, while 8% indicated no opinion.

Figure 4.17
Correlation betwee.‹ Unemployment and Entrepreneurship



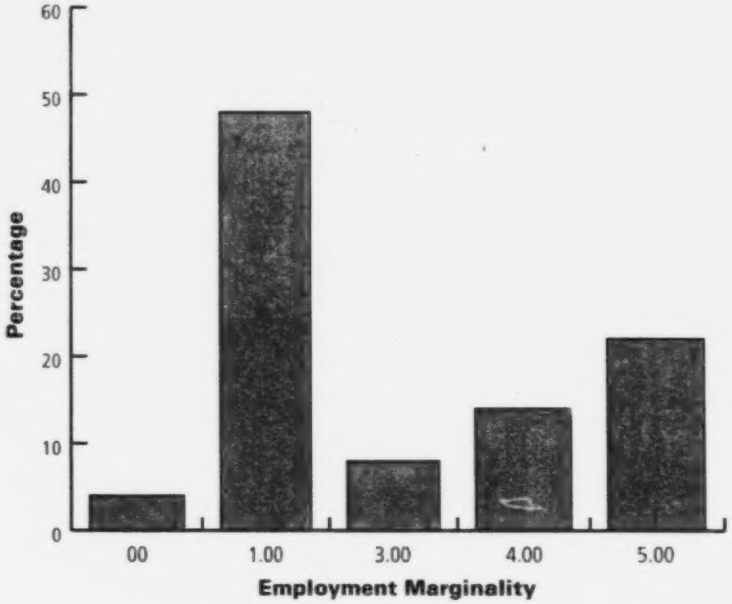
From Figure 4.17, the mean is 3.2 approximately 3, marginally agree; the median is 4, agree, while the mode is 5, strongly agree. It may be concluded that most African Canadian entrepreneurs started their business as a result of not being able to secure employment in their area of specialization or related area. This survey strongly collaborates with our analysis. We also indicated that a large population of self-employed African Canadian immigrants operating small business is due to their inability to secure sustainable employment.

Question 23, Relevancy of Educational Training to Small Business

My educational background is relevant to the work I currently do.

Over 56 percent cumulative of the African Canadian immigrant business community indicated that their educational training is highly irrelevant to the type of work they now do. While 40 percent cumulative indicated that their educational background is relevant to the work they now do, 4 percent indicated no opinion.

Figure 4.18
Correlation between Education and Current Business



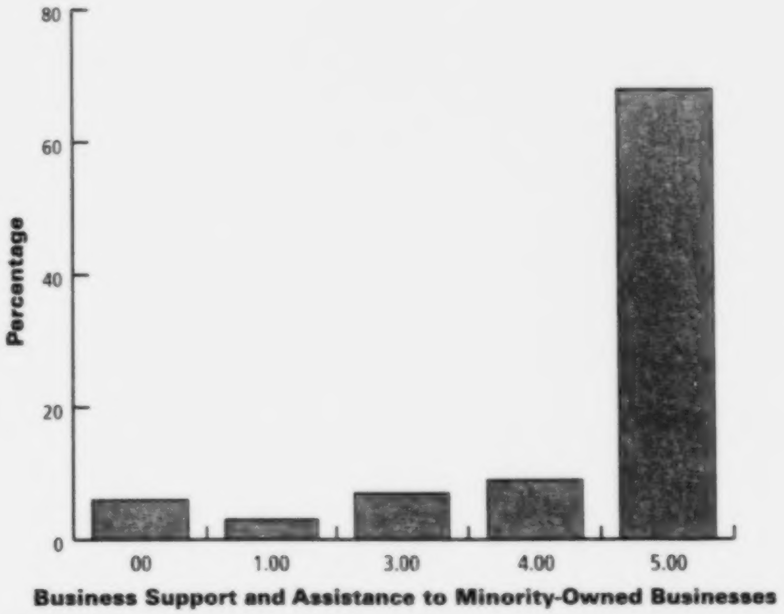
From Figure 4.18, the mean of the distribution is 2.56, midway between disagree and marginally disagree; the mode is 1.0, strongly disagree and the median is 1.0, strongly disagree. It may be concluded that African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs' educational training is irrelevant to the work they are doing presently.

Question 24, Minority Business Related Assistance

Should more business-related assistance be provided to minority-owned businesses?

Over 80 % cumulative of the African Canadian business community strongly agree that more assistance should be provided to minority-owned businesses.

Figure 4.19
Business Related Assistance To Minority-Owned Businesses



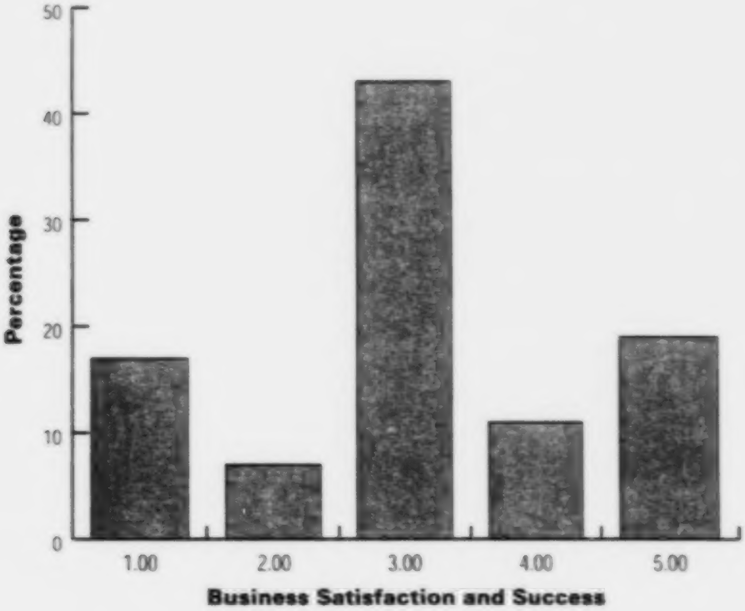
From Figure 4.19, the mean is 4.16, agree, the median and mode are both 5.0, strongly agree it may be concluded that most African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs strongly agree that minority-owned businesses should be provided with more government assistance and support services.

Question 25, Business Success

Are you pleased with the success of your business?

About 32% cumulative of the African Canadian business community are pleased with the success of their business, while 22% of the business community are not pleased with the success of their business. Forty-four % are marginally pleased with the success of their business.

Figure 4.20
Satisfaction with Current Business Success



From Figure 4.20, the mean is 3.12 approximately 3.0, marginally satisfied; the median and mode are both 3.0, marginally satisfied. It may be concluded that African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs are marginally satisfied with the success of their business.

Significant Test Analysis

To investigate the differences in opinions between African Canadian immigrants we performed student or t-test significant independent sample analysis. We compared different classes of African Canadian immigrants in order to verify any differences in opinion for some variables.

Question 3, Discrimination

Did you experience any discrimination when you were searching for a job?

African Canadian immigrants that arrived in Canada originally as students are more likely to agree strongly that they were discriminated against when they were searching for employment.

Those that arrived in Canada as immigrants are less likely to feel they are discriminated against when searching for employment. This research further indicated that social transition, how long they have been living in Canada and limited awareness might be responsible for their responses. The immigrants feel that they are aware of the discrimination that exists in Canada; however, they may not have experienced the type of systemic discrimination against Black persons that is inherent to the Canadian system. Hence some of them may not easily identify some systemic discrimination encountered during job search.

On the other hand, student immigrants came to Canada as students before deciding to stay. While they were on student visa, they lived in Canada under different circumstance and conditions than when they finally lived in Canada as residents. Some student may have experienced, witnessed or been aware of discrimination against Black persons before becoming residents. Secondly, these immigrants' employment expectations are similar to those of average Canadians with similar qualification and experience. Many non-student immigrants' expectations may differ significantly from those of student immigrants, hence the variation in opinion.

Question 8, Race Barrier

In your present employment, do you feel race may be a barrier for promotion and progress?

African Canadian immigrants that arrived originally in Canada as students are more likely to agree strongly that race may be a barrier for promotion and progress than African Canadian immigrants that arrived as immigrants.

African Canadian immigrants employed by the private sector and non-government are more likely to agree strongly that race may be a barrier for promotion and progress, than African Canadian immigrants employed in government departments.

This finding is absolutely correct. African Canadian immigrants that originally arrived in Canada as students spent a longer time in Canada before becoming residents. As a result, they understand the systemic discrimination problem more than those that recently arrived as Immigrants. They are probably not looking for just any type of employment; rather they are looking for the type of employment that is directly related to their training and qualifications.

The immigrant class, however, may be looking for any employment that will enable them settle down and secure necessary shelter. Hence, both African Canadian immigrants have different immediate needs, hence different understanding of the underlying system, and as a result, differences in opinion.

Question 11, Further Training

Do you feel you can benefit from further training in your job area?

African Canadian immigrants employed by the private/non-government organizations are more likely to agree strongly that they can benefit from further training in their job area than African Canadian immigrants employed by the government.

Question 1, Job Search Assistance

In my job search, I received the necessary assistance from government agencies/departments.

African Canadian immigrants who obtained their highest education in Canada are more likely to disagree strongly with this variable, than are African Canadian immigrants who obtained their highest degree outside Canada.

Question 10, Finding Employment

I did not experience any serious difficulty in finding employment when I first arrived in Canada.

Students who obtained their highest education in Canada, and later became residents are more likely to disagree strongly with this variable, than are African Canadian immigrants who obtained their highest education outside Canada.

This finding is correct. Because of their inability to secure employment after graduation, many African Canadian Immigrants that arrived in Canada as students pursue additional training.
While the Immigrant classes entered the labour market on arrival and were more open to various employment choices. This quick transition and flexibility in terms of employment may be responsible for the variation in opinions.

Question 15, Satisfaction with Current Employment

I am very satisfied with my current employment.

African Canadian immigrants who obtained their highest degree outside Canada are more likely to agree with this variable, than are students who later became residents. Different immediate needs may be responsible for this variation in opinions.

Question 9, Job and Educational Training

I feel that my current job matches my educational training.

African Canadian immigrants who obtained their highest education outside Canada are more likely to agree with this variable, than are African Canadian immigrants that obtained their highest degree in Canada.

Programs and Opportunities

Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the various types of employment and business related assistance and support programs currently in place which African Canadian immigrants are accessing, under accessing, or not accessing. Opportunities that are related to these programs are briefly presented and discussed, and information relevant to community-based programs and their benefits is discussed in detail. The discussions focus on two major programs, labour market-oriented programs, and entrepreneurship-oriented programs.

Labour market programs focus on current programs that have the potential to impact skills, re-training and knowledge to participants, hence, provides participants with the required knowledge and skills to compete confidently in the labour market.

Entrepreneurship-oriented programs focus on current programs and support services that aim to enhance entrepreneurship skills, knowledge and support. Primary providers of these programs are listed, including their organization profiles where necessary.

Human Resources Development Canada

Human Resources Development Canada is the only federal government department that provides comprehensive employment-related programs and support services to individuals, communities and families. HRDC provides programs and services that ideally help communities, families and individuals to achieve their goals that are related to

- Lifelong learning
- Employment access and adjustment
- Safe, effective workplaces
- Equitable participation
- Income security

HRDC achieve these goals through partnerships with other governments, business, labour and community-based groups. The partnerships aim to develop competent programs that identify ways and provide the means to achieve these objectives.

These goals can be achieved through various program initiatives that are funded and supported by the HRDC. Programs relevant to this project include but are not limited to the following:

- Job Creation Partnerships
- Self-employment
- Skills Employment Benefit Program

- Transitional Jobs Fund
- Foreign Worker Program
- Youth Employment Initiatives

Job Creation Partnerships

The Job Creation Partnerships target individuals that may want to work on special projects developed in partnership with the provinces or territories, the private sector, labour and community-based groups. These initiatives create incremental and meaningful work opportunities that help develop the community. Eligible Job Creation Partners include community-based groups, entrepreneurs, and provincial government. Partners must provide acceptable project plans in order to be considered.

The Job Creation Partnerships program provides a unique opportunity for the African Canadian immigrant community to partner with HRDC in project(s). The project(s) can be developed by individual(s), or the community as represented by an established community advocacy group. The concepts of the project(s) must meet the requirements and the objectives of the program.

A suitable project that may be recommended to the community for consideration is "a community based Resources Development Centre." The Resources Development Centre if well conceptualized and initiated will help the community to develop and market its abundant knowledge-based resources and high-level skills. We feel, HRDC will want to partner with the community in order to see a project of this nature and magnitude realized.

Self-Employment

The self-employment program assists individuals who have a good and realizable business idea and objectives, but are restrained by capital investment, to start up their own venture. The program provides planning assistance and financial income support while qualified entrepreneurs get their business up and running. Eligibility into this program is limited to individuals receiving Employment Insurance (EI) benefits.

The African Canadian immigrant community has a reasonable pool of potential entrepreneurs. These individuals know exactly what they want to do and where they want to do it, but they are short on equity and capital. They are also short on programs that include their experience in its structures.

If the community has a Resources Development Centre, the pre-employment and the self-employment developmental training can be developed, structured and presented to include the unique experience of African Canadian immigrants. Hence, African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs will participate and benefit from such a program.

Skills Employment Benefit Program

If individuals need to obtain or upgrade skills they maybe eligible for a skills grant that can provide financial assistance for tuition and training-related costs. Visible minority group members are a HRDC National Equity Group as well as a local target group for their programs. If a need for training is determined, the individual must be qualified for the EI benefits, or in receipt of EI benefits, or have established an EI claim within the last three years. Many members of the African Canadian immigrant community are not aware of this program.

Transitional Jobs Fund

The Transitional Jobs Fund (TJF) is a part of federal-provincial arrangements related to National Employment Service (NES), that support job creation activities in high unemployment areas. This initiative requires collaboration with partners such as the provinces, regional economic development agencies, other government departments, community-based groups and the private sector to create long-term sustainable employment in sectors that have good prospects for growth.

Foreign Worker Program

This program is part of the NES services that aims to bring into Canada temporary immigrant workers. The program seeks to improve the Canadian labour market by ensuring that qualified foreign workers are admitted to work in Canada only when, despite reasonable efforts made by employers to hire or train Canadian or permanent residents for jobs, vacancies cannot readily be filled by qualified Canadian or permanent residents.

Youth Employment Initiatives

The Youth Employment Strategy provides work experience and access to relevant labour market information to unemployed or under-employed youth and students as they move from school to work and into their first job and career. The strategy is delivered through partnership with business, labour, industry, and not-for-profit organizations, communities and other levels of government. The program constitutes four different components; Youth Internship Canada, Youth Service Canada, Student Summer Job Action, and Information.

The African Canadian Employment Clinic

The African Canadian Employment Clinic (ACEC) is a community-based initiative that provides metro area African Canadians with supportive resource-related employment services. The clinic provides one-on-one counseling to African Canadians seeking employment. Through various pre-employment workshops and seminars, ACEC prepare their client to be ready for the challenges of real world of work. Typical pre-employment workshops and seminars include the following:

- Resume Design
- Cover Letters
- Job Search
- Nutrition in the World of Work
- Interview Techniques

ACEC services target both the indigenous African Canadians and the African Canadian immigrants. From the Clinic database, many African Canadian immigrants have used the services of the clinic to secure gainful employment.

The Black Business Initiative (BBI)

The Black Business Initiative is a federal/provincial government initiative that aims to foster a dynamic and vibrant Black presence within the Nova Scotia Business Community. The agency goals are as follows:

- to help create economic independence for individuals
- to further entrepreneurial development, education and training in the Black community
- to build partnerships and linkages to the broader business community
- to create and improve access to private and public sector business support
- to improve standards of living and develop pride in communities

The BBI accomplishes these goals through one-on-one business counseling through its Regional Business Development Managers and provides various business startup and business running assistance. The BBI provides the following services to its clients:

- support in setting up their business structure
- financial assistance by partnering with their Loan and Development Funds, and assistance in accessing other funding resources
- assisting their clients in developing their business plan, marketing plan or advertising plan
- assisting their client with business research
- providing their client with training opportunities, consulting, mentors and post startup business care

The BBI services and programs are open to every Black Canadian resident in Nova Scotia; this target group includes African Canadian immigrants. The BBI is proud of its accomplishments within the African Canadian immigrant community. The BBI claimed that the initiative has helped some African Canadian immigrants to achieve their dream of owing their own business.

The goals of the BBI and its strategic position within the Nova Scotia business community command strong partnering with any organization advocating on behalf of the African Canadian immigrant community. Such partnering will be to the advantage of both organizations, and provide the necessary networking essential to succeed in today's competitive marketplace.

The Business Development Bank of Canada (BDBC)

The Business Development Bank of Canada is a federal government business development bank that provides financial and operational supports to small and medium-sized businesses in Canada. BDBC offers a full range of services, including specialized financing and business counseling, management training and mentoring to support small and medium-sized businesses.

The BDBC accomplish most of its objectives through different stages of counseling, management training and mentoring services. Each year, during the last week of October, the BDBC organize the Small Business Week to highlight the contribution of small business to Canada's economy. Motivational awards are presented to young entrepreneurs during the small business week.

Nova Scotia Economic Development andTourism

Nova Scotia Economic Development and Tourism is a provincial government department that provides various forms of funding to businesses and community based groups. The department offers funds through various programs that aim to help businesses start and expand, help communities to develop, and help individuals to secure career-oriented employment. The type of funding accessible to businesses, communities, and individuals are listed below:

- Business-Oriented Loans
  - The Community Business Loan Program
  - The Youth Entrepreneurial Skills (YES)
  - The Industrial Incubation Program
  - The Shipper Assistance Program
  - The Business Futures Program
  - The Strategic Tourism Development Program
  - The Financing Program for Innovative Small Businesses in Nova Scotia
- Community-Oriented Loans
  - The Community Opportunities Fund (COF)
  - The Waterfront Development Fund
- Employment-Oriented Loans
  - The Nova Scotia Employment Program
  - The Cooperative Employment Program
  - The Student Loan Employment Program
  - The Dalhousie Student Employment Program

To participate in any of these programs, participants must meet the specific program criteria, submit a business plan, and complete and submit all required application forms.

Recommendations

Introduction

The main objective of this research is to investigate the marginality and access to employment issues facing African Canadian immigrants in the Nova Scotia labour market. The primary research objective is to be accomplished through specific research assignments, namely:

- Survey the African Canadian immigrants residing in Nova Scotia who are unemployed, under-employed, self-employed, and fully employed.
- Review access to entrepreneurship program with focus on high school, post-secondary, and entrepreneurial career development.
- Establish primary data and conduct pilot investigation on African Canadian immigrants and other immigrants.
- Investigate the labour participation, occupation, income, and barriers of African Canadian immigrants and other immigrants of working age.
- Review, research, and investigate access and barriers to training and business investment capital.
- Investigate, analyze, and compare the relative parity and disparity in the employment of the African Canadian Immigrants and the above-listed recent immigrants.
- Finance/Banking Industry/Human Resource Sectors vis-à-vis self-employment and unemployment situations—the issue of access to business capital and how this relates to self-employment and the nature and success of self-employment.
- Identify barriers and needs, you will be required to research, investigate, and recommend alternative bridges or programs that will develop and create access to employment, sustain or change self-employment and unemployment situations.
- Review the present self-employment and entrepreneurship programs. Apart from researching and investigating the possibilities, which will improve the program, you will equally be required to research the possibilities for growth from micro to macro entrepreneurship programs. In the consideration of the passage to a macro entrepreneurship program special emphasis will be made on professional and university and/or allied institution graduates.

The above outlined research strategies can be summarized as participatory methodology that investigates attitudes and opinions of the target groups. The target groups in this research are the labour market key players (employers) and the community (African Canadian immigrant community). This chapter presents the recommendations and the conclusions of the works presented in the previous chapters of this report on Employment Research.

Participation

Labour Participation

This research concludes that African Canadian immigrant males participating in the Nova Scotia labour market have an average education that is a little higher than an undergraduate degree, but less than a Master's degree. Also, it concludes that African Canadian immigrant females participating in the Nova Scotia labour market have an average education which is higher than a high school diploma, but less than an undergraduate degree. Figures 5a, and 5b and Tables 4.2a (p. 98) and 4.2b (p. 99), show that the median education for both genders is an undergraduate degree. The mode or the most occurring education level for adult males is an undergraduate university degree, and for adult females, a high school diploma.

This research concludes that the mode or the most common employment for the African Canadian immigrant community is self-employment (Figure 4.9 and Table 4.6). This finding is a clear indication of marginality and employment access denial facing this community. Many self-employed African Canadian immigrants emphatically stated that they operated their own businesses just to avoid been unemployed. Some of these African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs would elect paid employment if the right opportunity prevails.

This research has established as indicated on page 122, that many self-employed African Canadian immigrants own and operate businesses outside their area of training and education. Section 4.5.8 shows that 56 percent of these entrepreneurs felt that their educational training is highly irrelevant to the type of work that they do presently. This is another clear indication of marginality and employment access denial.

Occupation

This research has established that African Canadian immigrants are employed in various occupations. Twelve point nine per cent of employed African Canadian immigrants are employed as skilled workers, 11.4% are employed as university/college, and school teachers, 4.3% are employed as engineers, 4.3% are employed as lawyers and accountants.

This research has further established that 4.3% of African Canadian immigrants are employed as social workers, 7.1% are employed as clerical workers, while 8.6% are employed as managers and supervisors. It also established that 1.4% are employed as physicians, 7.1% are employed as consultants, 2.9% are employed as healthcare workers, 13.8% are employed as unskilled workers, while 21.1% are self-employed.

With regard to occupational participation, the community is not effectively participating. Approximately 51.4% of employed African Canadian immigrants are employed in professional jobs. Some of these professional jobs are part-time positions. It may be concluded that the African Canadian immigrant community is not well represented in professional jobs, hence efforts should be in place to increase their visibility in most professional jobs.

Income

The average annual household income of the African Canadian immigrant community is between $20,000 and $35,000, the median annual household income is between $15,000 and $20,000, while the mode or the most occurring annual household income is $15,000 or less.

The 1996 Census Canada data reported average annual single family income of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia to be $20,707 and the median to be $17,000. We indicated in this research that the average annual household income is between $20,000 and $35,000 and the median is between $15,000 and $20,000.

These two research areas have different objectives; however, their results are closely correlated.

Education

This research has established that 80.2% of adult males in the African Canadian immigrant community are educated above high school diploma, while 33% of adult females are educated above high school diploma. However, 55.9% of the population earn less than $20,000 annually. Obviously, there is no correlation between the high level of education in the community and the average annual household income. Normally one would expect to find some form of correlation between these two variables.

Recommendations

The Nova Scotia labour market is a protected market. Class or kin dynamics propels a protected market. Marketers outside the class or kin are denied market participation, through structured labour market elements that aim to limit or even deny outside groups' participation. These elements may include job-related experience gained outside the protected labour market, credentials, etc. Nova Scotia labour market exhibits these qualities.

To increase the participation of African Canadian immigrants in the Nova Scotia labour market, the African Canadian immigrant community needs to establish an organization or agency that will advocate on their behalf. Such an agency or organization is needed to help the community to overcome some of the barriers and myths that have been instrumental for their continuous access to employment denial.

The community needs to establish more internal (within its members) employment oriented networking, and external networking with outside organizations and agencies. Employment services and programs should be more visible in the community. Many African Canadian immigrants are not well informed about the Canadian system, hence it is necessary to provide briefing workshops to newly arrived African Canadian Immigrants.

A community organization should be in place to help make internal and external networking more effective, provide briefing and settlement services, provide employment referral services, and other job search services.

Training

Human Resources Development Canada provides various employment-related programs that offer qualified individuals an opportunity to train, and hence improve their chances of securing better employment, or establish their own business venture. Some of these programs offer qualified individuals opportunities to attend community colleges, specialized skills development centers, and even upgrade their knowledge by taking special or continuing education courses as well as certificate and diploma courses (excluding university undergraduate and graduate degrees) in the universities.

HRDC provide funds to community-based organizations to help develop sustainable programs that aim to lift unemployed members of the community to employment. Some of these funded programs include a self-employment benefit program, pre-employment and entrepreneurial training.

To participate in HRDC programs, the African Canadian immigrant community must organize itself. The organized group must not necessarily be an umbrella type of organization. However, the group must have the community support and deliver transparent programs that provide economic empowerment and social benefits to the community.

A few examples of such organizations are the Black Community Work Group of Halifax, the Afro Caucus, the Black Learners Association, the Black Educators. These groups have developed and sponsored programs that benefited their community through various government funding.

Recommendation

We strongly recommend that the African Canadian immigrant community should establish community-based organizations that will network, develop, secure, and implement sustainable employment and social programs that could lead to economic and social transition of the community.

Finance and Banking

Financial institutions have improved customer's service in order to minimize race-related problems. Most banks now offer loan approval for personal, small, and medium size businesses through Internet, telephone, and in person. The present computerized age has revolutionized the way most banks do business. Although most banks have made significant efforts to improve their services, some race-motivated services decisions remain.

We indicated in the Consultation with Labour Market Partners section that a major setback for many African Canadian immigrants in accessing business investment capital is equity and credit history. Also it was indicated in the Community Survey section that many African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs venture into business due to unemployment. These two factors weigh heavily on these entrepreneurs when accessing business investment capital.

We established in the previous section that most banks are operated on established rules, norms, regulations and expectations. Some African Canadian entrepreneurs that meet the highest requirements for loans usually gain access to business investment capital or a personal loan. The banks show unwillingness to waive what they perceived to be their minimum standard.

Recommendation

We recommend that African Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs should, as much as possible, obtain the right information with respect to their dealings with financing institutions. A well-informed entrepreneur has greater control over their dealings in the business world. Again, we call for the establishment of community Business Resource Centre that will incorporate business education and training in their various programs.

Significant Analysis

It may be concluded that African Canadian immigrants that arrived in Canada originally as students are more likely to recognize discrimination during their job search, while African Canadians that arrived as immigrants are less likely to recognize discrimination. However, length of stay in Canada has much to do with both groups' ability to recognize discrimination. It may be concluded that African Canadian immigrants that are employed by the privatesector/non-government are more likely denied promotions and other employment progress opportunities than African Canadian immigrants employed by the government.

It may be concluded that African Canadian immigrants that obtained their highest degree outside Canada experience fewer difficulties in finding employment, while some members of this group also feel more satisfied with their current employment than do African Canadian immigrants who obtained their highest education in Canada.

General Recommendation

Establish a community-based advocating organization.

This organization should develop employment and socially-oriented programs that will provide the necessary community transition. The programs should include

- networking (internal and external)
- new immigrants briefing and settlement
- employment programs
- public service orientation program
- competitive public service entry test training
- interview preparation workshop
- self-employment program
- pre-employment program
- entrepreneurial program
- other resource development programs

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Report 3:
Bridging the Divide— The Cultural Experiences of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia

A report prepared for the
African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project
African Canadian Services Division
Nova Scotia Department of Education
By The Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures, Nova Scotia
Pat Thompson BE & Mansoor Wani BA
Principal Researchers
June 2001

Section 5

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It was a sincere pleasure to work with this team.

Ifty Illyas,

Executive Director

Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures Nova Scotia

Preface

In January 2001 the Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures (CDVC) was commissioned by the African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project Committee, Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, African Canadian Services Division, to examine the needs and challenges facing African Canadian immigrants in retaining and promoting their cultural identity. This study also examines the issue of cultural conflict between African Canadian immigrant parents and their children and how the various dynamics of cultural integration fit in with the Canadian Multicultural Policy. The focus of the study was to look at the cultural implications of adjusting in a culturally different society, and the challenges that arose from it, and to suggest guidelines to help make the transition easier.

Specifically the study required the consultants from CDVC to:

- Identify and document the needs and challenges facing African Canadian immigrants in retaining and promoting their cultural identity.
- Access the impact of culture and cultural identity on one's ability to integrate into a new society.
- Share experiences and information, and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia.
- Suggest strategies for change.

For the purposes of this report, an African Canadian immigrant is an individual of Black African ancestry, originating either directly from the African continent, the Caribbean, South America or the United States.

Methodology

The study was undertaken from January 2001 to June 2001. The study is based on a literature review and a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Cultural frameworks were used to analyse the variations among the African and Canadian societies.

Six focus groups were conducted with a total of twenty-eight participants representing twelve (12) countries from the African Canadian immigrant population of Nova Scotia. The questions in the focus groups dealt with (a) culture shock, (b) promoting and retaining culture, (c) parent-child relationships, (d) multiculturalism. The sessions were taped and transcribed to ensure that responses could be carefully analysed.

Data was also collected through a questionnaire survey, (p. 202). The questionnaire also included an educational component, researched by BarJun Consultants. The culture component of the questionnaire dealt with: (a) retaining and promoting culture, (b) parent-child relationship, (c) cultural orientations and (d) personal information. The questionnaire was coded and underwent numerous reviews to evaluate its reliability. The questionnaire layout was designed with the assistance of a graphic designer. A covering letter was also developed explaining the intent of the research, p. 201.

A province-wide mailing database was received from the steering committee, with names of approximately four hundred people. Additional names were also added to the list. Everyone on the list was telephoned to explain the research project and to request their cooperation in filling out the questionnaire.

One hundred and seventy-five people agreed to fill out the questionnaire. The questionnaires were mailed with a prepaid return envelope. An additional one hundred questionnaires were distributed through BarJun Consultants, steering committee members, focus groups participants, and at various events and conferences.

During the second week after the mail-out, another round of phone calls was made to encourage the participants to fill out the questionnaire. Questionnaires were mailed to individuals who indicated that they had not received them in the initial mail-out. A total of forty-four questionnaires were returned. This figure is very low considering the initial response and agreement by more than 175 people to fill out the questionnaire and the subsequent rounds of phone calls. Information from the questionnaire was tabulated and analysed. The respondents represent eighteen (18) countries from the African Canadian immigrant population of Nova Scotia.

Part 1 (p. 146) of the report introduces the study, the concept of culture, and cultural and communication frameworks. Canadian culture is compared with cultures from Africa based on various frameworks and explained with the help of schematic diagrams. Part 2 (p. 157) discusses and analyses qualitative data from the focus groups. Part 3 (p. 177) is an analysis of the questionnaire data. A discussion of the findings has been incorporated into Part 2 and 3. Part 4 (p. 194) makes recommendations and suggests strategies for retaining and promoting the culture of African Canadian Immigrants within the Canadian context and aiding them in the process of adapting to necessary change in the settlement process. Appendix 3 is a framework for change towards cultural competence and can be used to design change mechanisms.

This study, though by no means conclusive, is an attempt to seek an understanding of the challenges faced by African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia. It is by no means easy to compare the "Canadian culture", an "amalgamation" of various immigrant cultures, with an "African culture," which, in fact, is not one culture, but many diverse cultures. The cultural discussions are therefore broad generalizations, intended to guide towards a better understanding of the "cultures" in an effort to value and respect what they have to offer.

Limitations

Culture is a multifaceted concept. It is hard to quantify and difficult to measure the multiple, often subtle ways that it influences behaviour.[1]

The survey participants were individuals from various cultures originating from Africa who have been in Canada for varying periods of time. With time people adapt to the local culture, making it difficult to distinguish between the cultural traits they were raised with, and the traits that have been acquired with time.

It is difficult to compare the culture of Canada, which is primarily Eurocentric but has been influenced by successive wave of immigrants who have made Canada their home over the last three hundred years, to the "African culture," a culture of people from three different continents and numerous countries whose roots lie in Africa.

Time and cost implications did not permit a larger-scale participation of African Canadian immigrants. The questionnaire responses are from across the province, and the focus group participants come from Metro Halifax.

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[1] Francesco, Anne Marie: Gold, Barry Allen, International Organizational Behaviour, Prentice-Hall, 1997.

Introduction

The ethnic profile of Nova Scotia has changed significantly over the last few decades. Immigrants from many parts of the globe have made Nova Scotia their home, among them people of African descent, coming either directly from the African continent or from the Caribbean, South America, and the United States. Nova Scotia has also been home to people of African origin for over two hundred years. The immigrants often have had to struggle to adapt to a lifestyle very different from the one they were accustomed to and in the case of immigrant children, the culture of their parents, i.e., the household culture.

African Peoples

"Africa Is Not a Country" is the title of a recent book highlighting the challenge of looking for the culture of Africa, and in fact there is none. Africa has many cultures and a complex challenge arises when we try to compartmentalize these cultures into one to compare it to any other culture.[2]

Africa has the longest known human history of any continent. It is the second-largest continent in the world with an estimated population of 743,000,000 in 1997. African peoples, who account for over 12% of the world's population, are distributed among 54 nations and are further distinguishable in terms of linguistic and cultural groups which number around 1,000.[3]

Around the turn of the 20th century almost all of Africa fell under the control of European powers, with the boundaries of the new colonies often bearing no relationship to geographic reality or to the political and social organization of the indigenous population.[4]

Recent Immigration to Nova Scotia

People of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for centuries. This project looks at recent immigrants of African descent who have made Nova Scotia their home since 1961. For the purposes of this research, an African Canadian immigrant is someone whose black African ancestry is from Africa, South America, Caribbean, or the United States. The following tables highlight recent African Canadian immigration trends in Canada and Nova Scotia.

[2] Burns, Margy; Melnicove, Mark, Africa Is Not a Country. CIP Millbrook. 2000.

[3] The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, Columbia University Press, 2001. Available online at: http://www.bartleby.com/65/af/Africa.html

[4] Ibid.

Table 1
Total immigrant population in Canada by place of birth and period of immigration, 1996 census[5]

Place of Birth	Immigrant Population	Before 1961	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-1996
	4971070	1054930	788580	996160	1092400	1038990
Central and South America	273820	6370	17410	67470	106230	76335
Caribbean and Bermuda	279405	8390	45270	96025	72405	57315
Africa	229300	4945	25681	58150	64265	76260

Table 2:
Immigrant population by place of birth and period of immigration, 1996 census

(Figures in percentage as compared with immigration within that period of time.)

Place of Birth	Immigrant Population	Before 1961	1961-1970	1971-1 1980	981- 1990	1991-1996
	4971070	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Central and South America	273820	0.6%	2.2%	6.8%	9.7%	7.3%
Caribbean and Bermuda	279405	0.8%	5.7%	9.6%	6.6%	5.5%
Africa	229300	0.5%	3.3%	5.8%	5.9%	7.3%

Table 3:
Immigrant population in Nova Scotia and Metro Halifax by place of birth, 1996 census

Place of Birth	Canada	Nova Scotia	Halifax	Halifax as % of NS
Immigrant Population	4971070	41960	23635	56.33%
Central and South America	273820	705	375	53.2%
Caribbean and Bermuda	279405	790	525	66.5%
Africa	229300	1335	1180	88.4%

Although the figures do not give an exclusive count for those of African ancestry, as the figures in the above tables show, the number of immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, and South America has been increasing consistently over the last few decades. Immigration from the African continent itself has risen from 25,681 people from 1961–1970 to 76,260 people in the period from 1991 to 1996. A recent Time magazine report shows that immigrants from Africa formed 8% of the year 2000 immigration population.[6]

As Table 3 shows, most of the immigrants to Nova Scotia, especially immigrants from the African continent, have settled in Halifax. It is not possible to ascertain exactly how many of these individuals would qualify as "African Canadian immigrants" as defined in this report as there are people of different ethno-cultural backgrounds immigrating from the above mentioned regions.

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[5] Statistics Canada 1996 Census Report. Available online at: http://www.statscan.ca

[6] Frank, Steve. Canada: The Next Generation, Opening our Eyes to Immigration. Time Magazine. Vol 157. No 18 . May 07 2001.

Part I—Culture

"The survival of mankind will ..... depend on the ability of people who think differently to act together."

Geert Hofstede

Examining Cultures

All of us learn a specific culture as we grow up. This complex, non-explicit, prolonged process is our primary socialization. We learn behaviour from families, friends, schools, religious institutions, even from advertising and television programs. Culture is hard to quantify and it is difficult to measure the multiple, often subtle ways that it influences behaviour. Culture is something we learn from the environment, it is not something we are born knowing.[7]

People usually think, feel, and act as they do because they were brought up in a culture in which these ways were accepted, not only as good and right, but as natural.[8] Culture enables us, as a community, to act in acceptable ways because we attach the same meanings to the same things. Therefore, culture is an adaptive mechanism, it is a body of ready-made solutions to the problems encountered by the group. It is a cushion between man and his environment.[9]

The challenge arises when people from one culture migrate to another culture, when suddenly the norms of behaviour accepted unconditionally in one culture are questioned in another. At the same time a desire arises to preserve those aspects of our culture that we see as dear to ourselves and as something that defines us as individuals from that certain culture as opposed to the new culture that we are expected to conform to.

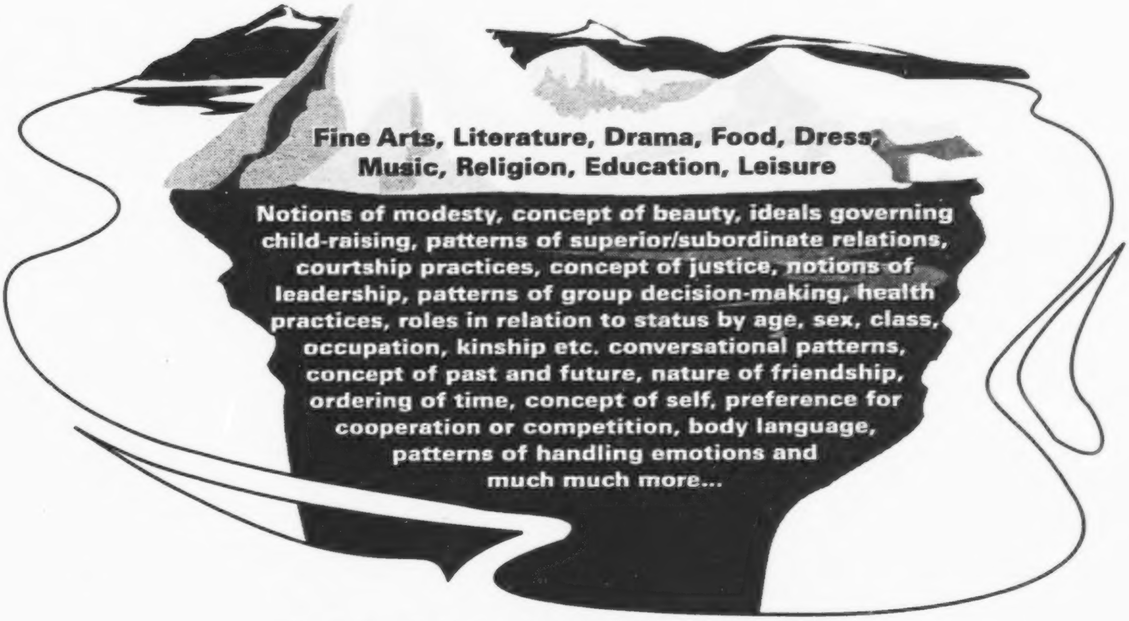
[7] Francesco, Gold 1997.

[8] Brown, Ina Corinne. Understanding Other Cultures, Prentice-Hall, 1963.

[9] Ibid.

The Cultural Iceberg[10]

The Visible Aspects of Culture


Fine Arts, Literature, Drama, Food, Dress,
Music, Religion, Education, Leisure
Notions of modesty, concept of beauty, ideals governing child-raising, patterns of superior/subordinate relations, courtship practices, concept of justice, notions of leadership, patterns of group decision-making, health practices, roles in relation to status by age, sex, class, occupation, kinship etc. conversational patterns, concept of past and future, nature of friendship, ordering of time, concept of self, preference for cooperation or competition, body language, patterns of handling emotions and much much more...

The Invisible Aspects of Culture

As the image of the iceberg shows, there is a need for lifelong learning. Just as nine-tenths of an iceberg is out of sight (below the water line), nine-tenths of culture is out of conscious awareness. Cultures cannot be understood by looking at the visible or apparent aspects only, they are just manifestations of deeper meaning and values. It takes years to understand the logic and rationale behind the things that cultures do and the manner in which they do it.

While immigrants struggle to understand and to be understood and become part of the culture of the society they have chosen to live in, they also want to preserve their own identity, their culture and their way of doing things.

Culture is often generalized in terms that correspond to geopolitical boundaries of nations. That is not always an accurate delineation of ethnic cultural boundaries because populations and nations do not always remain synonymous. Millions have changed their geographic locations, if not their cultural preferences because they have been refugees or immigrants. However, a national identification can be a useful shorthand for making references to large, generalized cultural values.[11]

[10] Adapted from AFS American Field Service, AFS Student Yearbook and the Arrival Orientation, New York.

[11] Beamer, Linda, The Imperative of Culture, Journal of Business & Technical Communication, Vol. 13 Issue 4, Oct 1999.

Definitions of Culture

In the 14th century Ibn Khaldun (1332-1407 C.E.), the founder of the science of culture stated that, "Culture is not an independent substance, but a property... of another substance which is mankind. Hence the natural character of culture must have reference to what is natural to mankind, i.e., to its nature and what differentiates him/her from the rest of the animal world."[12]

More than a century ago Edward Taylor (1871) defined culture as "...that complex whole which includes knowledge belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."[13]

One of the important definitions of culture was given by Kroeber and Kluckhohn in Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions, who saw culture as value-laden, transmitted patterns selected from tradition, which "may on one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action."[14]

Ferrano's more recent (1994) and simpler definition refers to culture as, "Everything that people have, think, and do as members of society."[15]

In general terms culture is a way of life of a group of people. There is no standard, commonly accepted definition. The most important criteria are that culture is shared behaviour and ideas which are cumulative, systematic, symbolic, and transmitted from generation to generation extragenetically.[16]

Geert Hofstede defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes one group or category of people from another."[17]

Understanding a culture's basic assumptions is important for understanding the culture itself. Knowledge of other cultures generates insights into one's own culture and behaviour. Without systematic comparisons, it is difficult to appreciate how culture influences one's own behaviour. This is because most of us believe that our culture is preferable, possibly superior, to other cultures. Researchers have developed frameworks to classify the cultures of the world. These frameworks are averages or norms of the value systems that compose a culture and represent approximations of expected behaviour in a culture.[18]

The tendency to use one's own culture as the comparative and evaluative framework for behaviour in other cultures is called ethnocentrism. People use their own culture as the norm and scale for judging other cultures, not realizing that a culture that seems different and strange on the surface, might not be that strange for the environment and circumstances of the people practicing its values. It is not appropriate to discard or disregard other cultures just because it is different from what we value and hold.

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[12] Langness. L.L. The Study of Culture. Chandler and Sharp Publications. Inc. CA. 1982.

[13] Schneider. Louis: Jean. Charles Bon Editors. The Idea of Culture in the Social Sciences. Cambridge University Press. 1973.

[14] Boon. James. Further Operations of Culture in Anthropology: A Synthesis of and for Debate. The Idea of Culture in the Social Sciences. Cambridge University Press. 1973.

[15] Francesco: Gold 1997.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

Cultural evaluation is further complicated because most of us tend to compare our 'ideal culture' with other people's 'actual culture', and make judgments about whole countries, and ignore the differences between urban and rural people, rich and poor, upper and lower classes, or culturally different ethnic groups.

A cultural framework, therefore, represents an average of peoples behaviour within a culture. There are always exceptions, and sometimes particular behaviours common across a whole culture seem to be contrary to a theory's categorization.

Hofstede's Dimensions Of Cultural Values[19]

In a large-scale research program analysing data from 116,000 employees from more than 40 countries in 1980, Geert Hofstede extracted four dimensions of values to explain differences among cultures:

- Individualism/collectivism
- Power distance
- Uncertainty avoidance and
- Masculinity/femininity

Based on this research countries were given values (from 1 to 100) for these four dimensions to help compare them with other countries. Additional research by Hofstede has provided dimension value figures for other nations also, including some African regions. Additional countries have been included in our research to help compare the figures.

Table 4
Cultural dimension scores for twelve countries.[20]

Country	ID	PD	UA	MA
Canada	80H	39L	48M	52M
Eastern Africa	27L	64M	52M	41M
West Africa	20L	77H	54M	46M
South Africa	65H	49M	49M	63H
Jamaica	39L	45M	13L	68H
Britain	89H	35L	35L	66H
France	71H	68H	86H	43M
Arabic World	38L	80H	68H	52M
Brazil	38L	69H	76H	49M
Costa Rica	15L	35L	86H	21L
Mexico	30L	81H	82H	69H
United States	91H	40L	46M	62H

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[19] The material for this section is primarily based on Mills, Colleen. Understanding Cultures. Lincoln University, New Zealand. 1998. Available online at: http://www.ac.wwu.edu/-commdept/318/318e.html

[20] Hofstde, Geert. "Promoting a European Dimension of Intercultural Learning-Developing School Materials" EFIL Seminars. Vienna 17-20 April 1997. Available online at: http://afs.org/efil/old-activities/valuejan98.htm

1) The values for a particular variable represent the score of a country for that variable.
2) ID= Individualism, PD= Power Distance,
UA= Uncertainty Avoidance, MA= Masculinity.
3) H = High third, M = Medium third, L = Low third

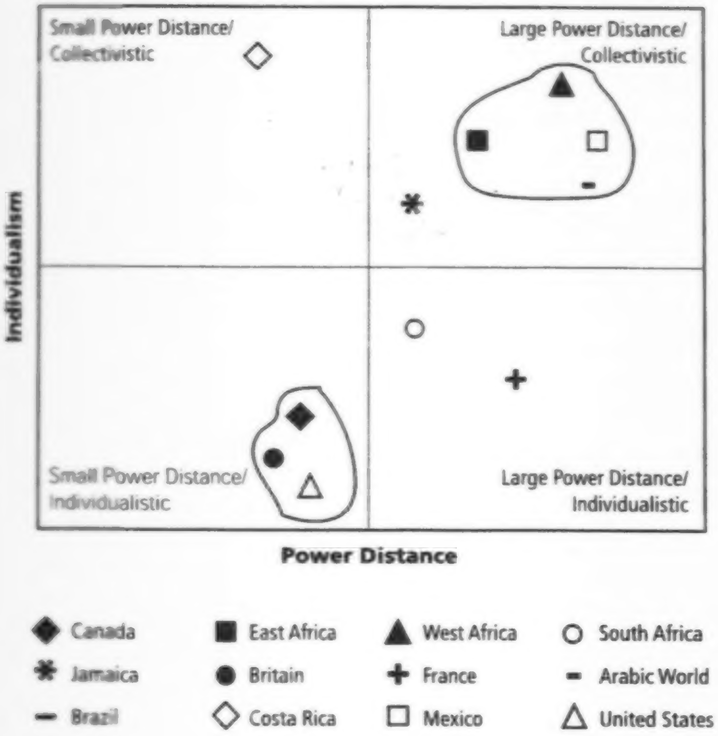
Individualism/Collectivism

In an individualistic culture the emphasis is on individual goals. The needs, views and aspirations of the individual are considered more important than those of the group. Competition between individuals is accepted and encouraged. The "I" identity is most important. Individualistic cultures also tend to compartmentalize time and follow time schedules closely. Being punctual is important. Countries like Canada, Britain and South Africa are considered to be individualistic and have high scores for the individualism value.

In a collectivist culture the emphasis is on group goals. The needs, views and aspirations of the group or groups to which the individual belongs are more important than those of the individual. People are expected to fit into the group and people can expect to be looked after by the groups they belong to in exchange for loyalty. Cooperation between individuals in the group is expected and encouraged. The "we" identity is most important. Countries like Mexico, Brazil and Western Africa (e.g., Nigeria, Ghana) and East Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia) are considered to have predominantly collectivistic cultures and have low scores for the individualism value. (See Table 4)

While a culture tends to be either individualist or collectivist, there will always be elements of both in the culture.

Figure 1-1
Hofstede's Dimensions of Cultural Values Illustrated



Power Distance

Power distance is the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept that power is unequally distributed.[21] Individuals in cultures with low power distance do not consider superiors to be very different from themselves. They are more likely to accept expert power than coercive power. Respect for the person and equality are important in low power cultures. People do not automatically defer to people of higher rank. Leaders and bosses must be respected as people. It is not enough to have a high position. Canada and United States are considered to be low power distance countries and have low scores for the power distance value. (See Table 4.)

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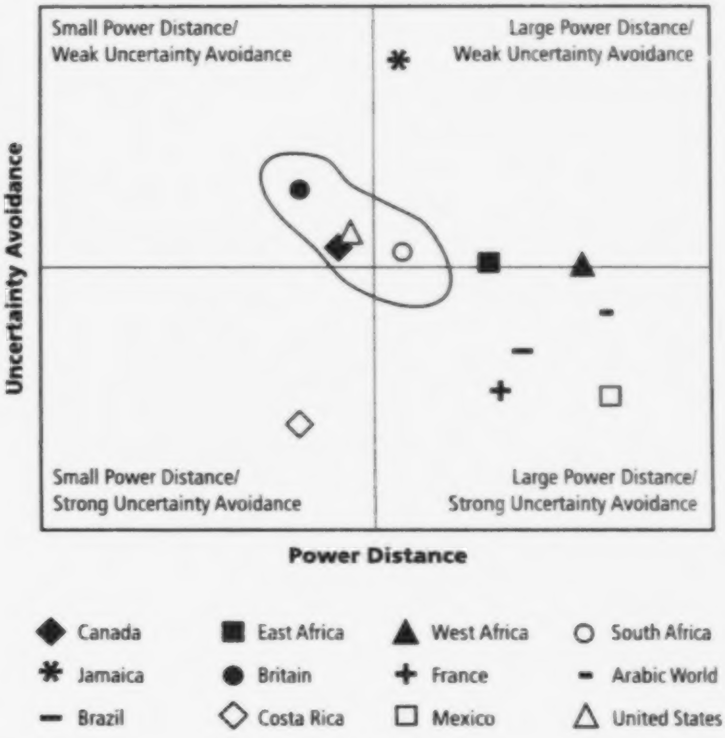
[21] Francesco, Gold 1997

Individuals in cultures with high power distance are likely to be more tactful, exhibit high levels of deference towards those in authority and accept that others have power over them. They are likely to consider themselves to be different from those in authority, be conforming, and expect conformity from those they have power over. Inherited wealth and position are also likely to be considered to be antecedents to influence in culture with high power distance. The West African region (e.g., Nigeria) is considered to be high power distance region.

Figure 1-2
Hofstede's Dimensions of Cultural Values Illustrated



Uncertainty Avoidance

This dimension refers to the tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity. Members of cultures with low uncertainty avoidance have less need for rules and absolute truths than members of cultures with high uncertainty avoidance. They are tolerant of ideas and behaviours different from the accepted norm. Diversity is accepted and change is more likely to be considered to be a normal part of life than in a culture with high uncertainty avoidance. People are also more likely to be risk takers in this sort of culture. In low uncertainty avoidance countries like Jamaica and Hong Kong individuals have strong feelings of personal competency and entrepreneurial behaviour is common.

Members of cultures with high uncertainty avoidance have a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. They seek rules and absolute truths. They are not very tolerant of ideas and behaviours different from the norm, and consensus is strongly valued. Japanese culture would fit into this category. In strong uncertainty avoidance countries like Brazil and Mexico, concern for doing things correctly is great.

The cultures of Canada, South Africa, East Africa, and West Africa fall in the middle third group, between the two ends of the spectrum.

Masculinity/Femininity

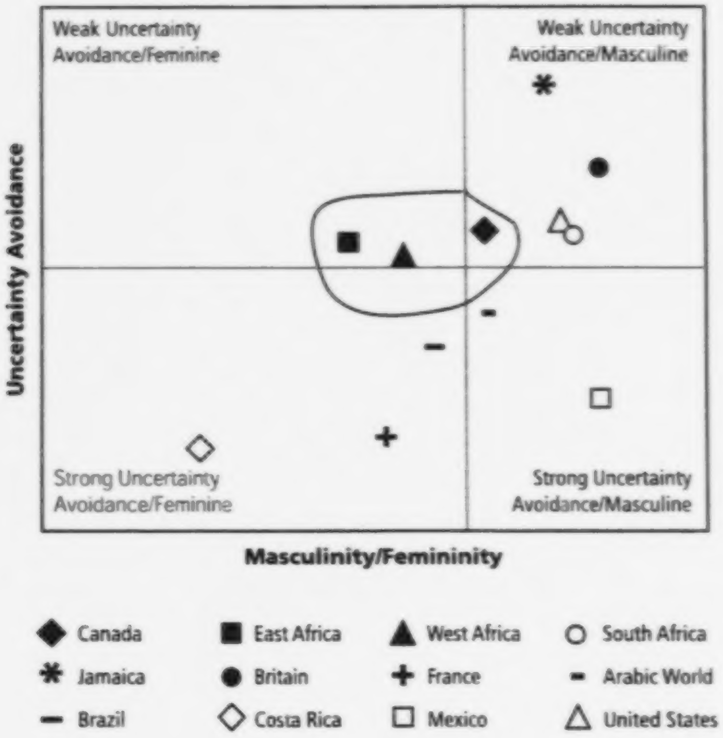
This dimension refers to the value placed on goods and commodities, power and assertiveness as opposed to people, quality of life, and nurturing.

A masculine culture places the highest value on materialism, power, and assertiveness. Such cultures place a strong emphasis on competition, performance, personal ambition, independence, and work. They tend to view work as a central component of life. They also tend to have strongly differentiated sex roles and greater value differentials between men and women in the same positions. (The label "masculine" is used because these tough values are universally associated with the male role.) The societies of South Africa, Jamaica, and United States are considered to be masculine and have high scores for masculinity value.

A feminine culture places the highest value on people. In particular they emphasize service to others, interdependence between people, responsibility to others and the quality of social life. Home life tends to be more central than work in the lives of people in feminine cultures. The sex roles are also likely to be less distinct and the stress levels lower than in masculine cultures. (The label "feminine" is used because these traits are usually associated with the female role.) Costa Rica is considered to have a feminine culture because it embraces the above values.

Canada, East Africa, and West Africa fall in the middle third category.

Figure 1-3
Hofstede's Dimensions of Cultural Values Illustrated



Communication Styles

Understanding verbal communication styles is an important part of understanding the way cultures vary. The words used and the way they are put together tell much about a particular culture. Verbal interaction styles reflect and embody the affective, moral, and aesthetic patterns of a culture. Verbal styles are part of a culture.

Culture is the mediator, interpreter, and source of meanings. The language, the level of formality and politeness in the language, and the tone are some of the attributes of encoded messages driven by cultural meanings.[22] Cross cultural communication is more difficult than communication among people of the same culture.[23]

[22] Beamer 1999.

[23] Francesco, Gold 1997.

Hall's High and Low Context Cultural Framework[24]

Edward Hall defined the concept of context to explain differences in communicating styles among cultures. In high-context cultures, such as most African cultures, family, friends, coworkers, and clients have close personal relationships and large information networks. Therefore people in high-context cultures know a lot about others and do not require extensive background information while communicating. People in low-context cultures such as Canada separate their lives into different aspects such as work and personal lives. Therefore, when interacting with others, they need to receive more detailed information.

Objectives in communicating come from culturally defined goals. Generally these goals consist of building relationships and obtaining results, and which goal receives greater emphasis seems to vary from high-context cultures, which emphasize relationships, to low-context cultures, which emphasize results. Expectations about the motivation for the communication result from cultural priorities. For instance, in cultures that tolerate wide power distances, the motivation for a manager's message is often primarily to demonstrate the authority of the manager—an intrinsic expectation. In cultures that prefer narrow power distances, motivation for a top-down message is often primarily to accomplish a task—an extrinsic expectation.[25] Table 5 identifies the differences in verbal communication styles based on communication variables developed by Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey in 1998.[26]

It is also difficult to express one language's precise meaning in another language. Also someone speaking a second language may use the communication style of his/her native language, making communication even more complex.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Beamer 1999.

[26] Francesco, Gold 1997.

Table 5:
Verbal Communication Styles Comparison

Verbal Style	Canada	Most African Nations
Direct *vs.* *Indirect*	**Direct** Message is more explicit. Effort to convey true feeling through choice of words.	**Indirect** Message is more implicit. Effort to maintain group harmony and concern for other's feelings.
	(Individualistic, low context)	(Collective, high context)
Elaborate *vs.* *Exacting*	**Exacting** Quantity of talk is moderate. Emphasis on precision and clarity.	**Elaborate** Quantity of talk is relatively high, description includes detail, metaphors, repetition. Verbal elaboration and exaggeration are typical.
	(Low uncertainty avoidance, low context)	(Moderate uncertainty avoidance, high context)
Personal *vs.* *Contextual*	**Personal** Focus is on speaker, "personhood." Direct and informal address on an equal basis. Use of first name common.	**Contextual** Focus is on role of speaker, role relationships. Words reflect role and hierarchical relationship.
	(Low power distance, individualistic,	(High power distance, collective, high
context)	low context)	
Instrumental *vs.* *Affective*	**Instrumental** Language is goal oriented, sender focused.	**Affective** Language is process oriented, receiver focused. Emphasis on not creating uncomfortable situation. Meaning is expressed
	nonverbally.	
	(Individualistic, low context)	(Collective, high context)

Part 2—Focus Groups: A Qualitative Analysis

A total of 28 African Canadian immigrants from 12 countries participated in six focus groups sessions. To elicit full participation in the discussions, participants were informed that their names would be kept confidential. During the one and a half hour sessions, many issues came up for discussion. The discussions centered around four themes:

- culture shock
- retaining and promoting culture
- parent-child relationships
- multiculturalism

(Note: Comments made by the focus group participants are italicized.)

Culture Shock

Culture shock is described as the physical and emotional discomfort one suffers when coming to live in another country, or a place different from one's country of origin. It results from the feelings of frustration that many new immigrants experience when they lose familiar signs and symbols in their lives.[27]

Culture shock challenges understanding between ourselves and others. What is considered normal behaviour in the home culture is not accepted and therefore becomes problematic.[28]

Each focus group was asked the following questions to obtain information of their experiences on culture shock:

- What were the greatest cultural difficulties you and your family faced in adjusting to the lifestyle/culture of Nova Scotia?
- What were some of the things that shocked you?
- Have you learned anything from this experience?
- What do you think would have helped make your transition easier?
- What advice would you give a newcomer to help them with culture shock?

Their responses was documented under three categories:

- cultural awareness
- cross-cultural communication
- suggestions to newcomers

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27 Sreenivasan, Govind, Understanding Seniors and Cultures, Multicultural Activities Guide 3. Alberta Cultural Heritage Division, Alberta.
28 Francesco; Gold 1997.

Cultural Awareness

Many participants had faced difficulties upon arrival in Nova Scotia and they felt that the government has not done enough to make their integration easier.

"Maybe the government's (immigration) objectives are very clear; economical, political or financial, but these objectives are not very integrated within the community. For example, I left my country and the next morning I wake up, I have no idea where to go. The minute I show up at someone's door, they are shocked. For example I wanted to go and apply for volunteer work, I go there and they are shocked to see me, and I ask myself, am I hurting someone. People are not really informed about people like us, they are just caught there by surprise. People have the impression that we are consuming Canadian money, this is why our profits are going down. The government is not really investing in trying to address these issues."

"Immigrants are caught here by surprise and the government is not addressing these issues."

Not all the experiences mentioned were negative. Many participants felt that Canada was a new beginning for them and they had encountered many positive experiences.

Positive Experiences

"I know the feeling that many of the new immigrants have, I was like that in the beginning, and I did not know the language, and everywhere I went I found people were very helpful. And did you know that the law has exceptions for you when you are new. They make concessions on the basis of being new in the country, or not knowing the system, or not understanding the language. But one has to be open to people also."

"On the other hand, Canada accepts, greets and treats immigrants who come here as refugees very well, and all their needs are met with, that's fantastic."

"I cannot contain myself at the level of religious freedom."

"I like the people here, they seem to have a heart."

"The cultural experiences were not all negative, I experienced quite some differences when I came here. I think that has had an impact on the way I turned out in this society."

Many cultural values of African Canadian immigrants clash with the values of the dominant culture. As the Hofstede cultural framework discusses in this part of the report, most Africans are from collectivist societies where one does not talk about oneself and one's belongings.

Positive Experiences in Nova Scotia

- Help given at school
- Respect for time in Canada
- Relaxed way of doing things in home culture versus punctuality here
- Supervisor and work relationships are better here
- Power distance is small
- Ability to be truthful in Canada
- Not hard to integrate here as a young person

"Even though we are from different parts of the same continent, we are brought up to be modest, not to boast about how much we have and who we are. So I had to struggle out of that shell and tell some of the people that actually in our country we are not poor. Some of us who are here came with a lot of education, and lived in big houses. In our home culture, you go to work and by the time you came back, part of the house work was done. Somebody washes clothes and irons them and we don't really handle house chores. We have social structures, not everybody is rich, some are rich, some poor, some very poor, but that is not only in Africa."

My Canadian friends told me if somebody asks 'how are you?' then you better say 'I'm all right', because nobody is really interested in how you really are. That is a culture shock, because for us if somebody says how are you, you start telling all your headaches and then we begin to talk about it and from there the person becomes a counselor. Our counselors are not the doctors, you don't make an appointment to go and see a counselor to talk to them about your frustrations. Your friends listen to you and give you advice, 'do this or do that, and that particular one you can ignore, because everyone has that kind of problem,' and then I feel better."

Adjusting

"You don't really see anything you can relate to, sometimes we talk about culture or think about culture and forget that our everyday life and survival is part of our culture too. I think the issue is still current and immigrants have to go out of their way."

"My cultural experience has been really hampered by the society, it takes longer for somebody to adjust to a new environment. I really think the government needs to help out."

Assimilation

"I came here with a lot of money, but even then I could not rent an apartment. They said 'Oh, you don't have a credit history, you don't have employment and you don't have your SIN number.' I began to wonder, I've hardly been here for a little while, how do you expect me to have employment immediately, before I can rent a house? New immigrants are not assimilated, it takes a minimum of three years, and you must have at least gone through the system before you are easily assimilated. Even then it's still not smooth for you, it is a level of acceptance issue."

Most participants felt that the majority of Canadians were unaware of the "real Africa," its history, culture, political, and economic conditions.

"People ask, so where do you live, what kind of house do you live in, questions like that. I found I had to explain very very simple things that I thought everyone knew. I was shocked how little people in Nova Scotia knew about Africa, because Africa is not a country. We all come from different countries, and even coming from the same country we speak different languages. Sometimes I felt a bit disappointed at the questions. Sometimes I felt like asking myself are there no non-governmental organizations around here."

Additional Comments

- Longer time to adjust due to small barriers
- Lack of sympathy
- Negative stereotypes
- Misunderstanding of values
- Feeling of isolation and loneliness
- Lack of acceptance
- Accent and language are a major problem
- Qualifications not recognized
- Halloween was a shock
- Lack of information on service delivery
- No information on immigrant communities
- People live inside a "box" within four walls
- No communication with neighbours
- Less community oriented life
- Celebrations are compact here

"People ask 'do you have cars there', or 'I was going to send some things to Africa as donations I wanted to buy socks but do you think in Africa they put on socks, I was really furious. So we end up telling people that in my country we are like this and we had this we had that, then I get responses, people saying why did you come here. It's like I shouldn't have come here. That really bothers me."

Cross-Cultural Communication

The very notion of "effective communication" is culturally defined. Communication is not culture free because messages are the product of human minds that are formed and informed by culture. Grammar and pronunciation do not significantly hinder communication except as they affect the attitude of the listener. However, accent, intonation and stress do carry subtle meanings and if the patterns of one language are grafted on to another a breakdown in communication may occur.[29]

"English speaking immigrants should inform themselves of the variation in use and meaning of words. For example someone offering a ride, inviting for coffee."

"I almost went crazy for the first six months because there was no one to talk to, part of the problem was learning the language, even though we speak (English as our first language). For example I went to the store to buy a 'flask', the lady was looking at me funny. I talked to a supervisor and then I tried to describe a flask and the way I was responded to was like I was stupid, because they did not know what I was talking about. Just like a 'torch', here you call it a 'flashlight', a 'flask' is a 'thermos'."

"I failed my learners driving licence test, you know why? Because I could not understand what the car was supposed to do on the pavement. The pavement in South Africa is the sidewalk!"

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[29] Biocchi, Rosanne: Radcliffe, Shanthi, A Shared Experience, Bridging Cultures, London Cross Cultural Learner Centre, London, ON, 1986.

Most participants found accent to be a major barrier to communication and felt a need for speech training. They also felt that the government should provide this kind of training to English speaking immigrants, since they provide English language education to non-English speaking immigrants. This view was not shared by everyone as some participants felt that their accent was part of who they were and people should be able to accept it and understand it, provided they paid a little more attention.

"I don't see why there should be a program to change the way I speak, because it is part of who I am. In terms of not perceiving my accent, I would say it is a barrier. That doesn't mean that I don't have two brain cells to rub together, just because I don't speak the way you do. As long as I am clear, articulate and precise in what I say, you should be able to understand me, it is just part of the perception."

Suggestions to Newcomers

Participants felt that newcomers do not have information about the realities of life in Canada and are caught unaware upon arrival. They felt that there is a strong need to educate new immigrants on the challenges that are to be expected.

"The attitude that one has when coming to Canada is of high expectations and all of a sudden you realize that there is a side you never knew, I think the country is somehow oversold. A lot of people come here not realizing that."

"New immigrants experience a sudden realization of living in a cold environment - on the other side new immigrants have unrealistic expectations."

"First thing is to expect some big changes in the lifestyle, part of it would be living independently as we have the extended family system and here you do not have that."

In individualist countries like Canada there is more concern for oneself, and nuclear families are the norm. This differs from the collectivist approach of supporting extended family in most African countries.

Family Values

"Some people here do not appreciate extended family structures, and I say this from experience because when you are here and trying to take care of extended family back home, people look at you as if you are sick in the brain. For an immigrant coming here it is good to know that we will really experience big differences. If you know about it before arriving here, it may help you deal with it. Our family value system is totally different, that is part of our culture. I think that needs to be addressed, and also people coming here need to know beforehand that there are certain things you can do in your culture that are encouraged and accepted but they are neither accepted nor encouraged here in Canada."

Participants stressed the need for new immigrants to involve themselves in community organizations and also to search for other means of integrating into society.

Disciplining

"Back home spanking is part of disciplining, here it is almost a taboo, not that it is not done. There are lots and lots of child abuse cases and government wanted to have something in place to protect children and that is understandable. A person trying to come to Canada needs to know these things. Because, we look back and I do not have the statistics, we know that most of our people get into trouble with the law in matters relating to issues around child raising and disciplining and how their beliefs and values can come into conflict with the laws of the land."

"Meet and contact community organizations, newcomers do not know where to go and where to find accommodation. If you go to these organizations they are good places, someone will be there to guide you."

Suggestions

- Easier to adapt if change is expected
- Great help if someone can advise you
- Working helps with learning language and culture

"Adapt quickly to good aspects of the culture here, participate in every activity that there is an option to, so that they can learn, for example, the cinema, festivals."

"Language schools are very helpful, the school helps me and I think it will continue to help me. Community organizations helped with jobs also."

Retaining and Promoting Culture

There are five main modes of adjusting to a new culture: [30]

- **Acculturation:** Acceptance of the host culture's values to the destruction of one's own.
- **Structural assimilation:** Retention of a weaker version of one's original culture to adjust to the host.
- **Isolationism:** Complete retention of one's original culture without compromise to the host.
- **Attitude or behavioural reception assimilation (cultural blending):** A weakening of the original culture by adoption of some host culture modes.
- **Marginalization:** A weakening of the original culture without adaptation to the host.

Researchers suggest that cultural blending is the most common when adjusting to a new culture, followed by, structural assimilation. There are also examples of replacement of the original culture by complete adoption of host cultural values. It would appear from the foregoing that it might be expected that there would be some blending of values in a multicultural situation.[31]

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30 Assimilation, absorption, or separatism?: Observations from a High School study. Brian Astill, The Flinders University of South Australia. 1996. Available Online at: http://www.aare.edu.au/96pap/astib96.139

31 Ibid.

The focus group discussions on retaining and promoting culture were based on the following questions:

- During your first three years living in Nova Scotia, what programs and services were most helpful to making your adjustment more comfortable?
- Do you retain many of your cultural traditions in your home? Which ones are they?
- Do you feel comfortable sharing and displaying your cultural traditions with those of another cultural group, elaborate?
- Do you participate in cultural events/activities? If yes, which ones?

Based on their responses this section was divided into four categories:

- retention of 'traditional home' culture
- programs and services
- systemic discrimination
- media

Retention of 'Traditional Home' Culture

Brian Astill's research suggests that there is room for doubt that a particular minority culture can survive in its original form, even if an enclave is set up to protect it.[32]

Participants felt that in trying to adapt or live by the norms of this society they were losing aspects of their culture. Also most agreed that trying to balance the two cultures was difficult.

"It is possible to lose more of your culture here. I think if people come together like we are doing now, rather than being in separate groups, there is a great hope that more of our culture will be preserved."

Need for co-operation

"There is no disagreeing among ourselves about the fact that we can only survive as a group here in Nova Scotia, if we regard ourselves and understand and do not deny the fact that we are all from Africa, both the black Nova Scotians here and the African immigrant. We are black people and if you are a black person wherever you are, you are an African. We do not have to deny that fact."

"We try to retain our culture, but peer pressure is strong, most Africans are losing part of their culture because it is difficult to pass on to the children."

Immigrants from the Caribbean felt an affiliation with immigrants from the African continent.

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32 Ibid.

Comments

- Comfortable maintaining cultural values at home
- Children losing traditional languages
- Cultural complexity especially in family ethics and religion
- Try to share my culture and learn from others
- Some parts of province and some organizations are more multicultural
- Culture is more than food and dance

"We try to connect culturally with people of African descent, because most Caribbean people share what you could call a 'culture', but they all come from somewhere else and they have lost their really true culture."

Balancing the Two Cultures

Immigrants encourage their way of living within their homes, but that is not easy, especially with the children, who are having difficulty balancing the two cultures. According to the 1996 Census, 69% of visible minorities living in Nova Scotia were Canadian born. This is the result of generations of old settlements of Blacks[33]

"I retain my food habits and I also try to retain the good aspects of my culture/value system, I would not say 100%, because no culture is perfect. So I retain the good things from my cultural values, family values and I try to encourage them in my home. It is very difficult to do that with children. When we talk of cultural shock we talk about recent immigrants, but I tell you, the children that are born in families of immigrants suffer, they are suffering even more than recent immigrants, trying to balance these two cultures, it's very very difficult."

Adjustment

"As much as African immigrants would like to retain a part, if not all of his or her culture, the problem or hassle is that there is too much government intervention. Whether it is right or wrong, African parents spank their children when they make serious mistakes, we don't praise them for that, we discipline them. We are seeing what some children are doing here—they have too much freedom and when you compare, we don't have too much crime in African countries, the only struggle there, is for power. But now when we have so-called freedom, which I always question, what do we mean by freedom? I have the freedom to live in my house, but if I step on my doorway and shout, in a few minutes a cop will come to my house and knock and say that I was disturbing the peace of this community. So what freedom do I have? We are losing a lot of our culture, not passing it down to our children, because of the larger community expectations. We live in the same melting pot. So some sort of recognition of the immigrants' culture is required, so yes, we are losing part of our culture at home because of societal intervention."

"The adjustment was easy in some ways, at first you think because you speak English it is easy, but it also makes some things difficult as it is much easier to lose your culture."

"Africans have more conservative values, which clash with modern values which we don't feel part of."

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33 Yakalusky, Konrad, Globe and Mail, Reading 3, Managing Diversity Module, Contemporary Issues in Management, Saint Mary's University, Winter, 1999.

Programs and Services

Participants felt that the government had not taken appropriate steps to initiate and monitor services to immigrants. There was a feeling that there were not many services available for the new immigrants. Secondly, they felt that information about existing services was difficult to access.

Adjusting Without Services

"There are some services available for the first two-three years of arrival, but nothing beyond that. Problems of adjusting don't stop in the first three years. But if you are here and you are old and you have problems, there is no recourse. We have more problems than the newcomers, there might be some services, but how do we get to know about them?"

"There is no sense having a welcome wagon if the individual welcoming you does not understand the cultural background."

"Existing services do not serve the needs of African immigrants."

"We need an organization that will address the needs and concerns of African immigrants."

"If there is something that the Provincial or Federal Government is funding to help immigrants to settle into the new environment, my concern is how much of this service is offered to African Immigrants. From my experience and those of other Africans, the service is zero. I am not saying that there is nothing out there, but my concern is that if there is something that the Provincial or Federal Government is funding in the name of service for immigrants and if that includes African Immigrants, then that organization should be held liable to provide the service or another organization should be formed to take care of this type of service that will focus on the needs of African Canadian immigrants."

Systemic Discrimination

There are no more emotionally loaded and potentially explosive topics than discrimination and racism.[34] Racism represents a set of ideologies and beliefs that implies, justifies, and asserts the superiority of one social group over another on the basis of physical and cultural characteristics. Through institutionalized power, these ideologies and beliefs are put into practice.[35]

Racism is not only an attitude, it is the specific actions that result from this attitude which impact upon, marginalize, and oppress some people. It is manifested in overt and covert forms both at the individual and institutional level. Overt forms of racism refer to deliberate attempts by individuals or institutions to discriminate against racial minority groups with the consequence of denying these groups full participation in society.[36]

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[34] Otero, George; Smith, Gary. Teaching About Cultural Awareness, Centre for Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, Colorado, 1989.

[35] Lock Kunz, Jean; Milan, Anne; Schjetagne, Sylvain. Unequal Access, A Canadian Profile of Racial Differences in Education, Employment and Income. Canadian Race Relations Foundation, Ottawa, 2000.

[36] Ibid.

As distasteful as the topic might be, the feeling of being discriminated against was widely expressed during the focus group sessions. Participants stressed the need for the majority community to recognize the subtle ways in which established institutions contribute to the perpetuation of inequality and interracial divisiveness. Anecdotes in this section discuss aspects of racism and discrimination in relation to jobs and immigration. Participants also felt that there were many misconceptions regarding cultural traditions and beliefs of African Canadian immigrants.

Additional Comments on Discrimination

- Help is discriminated on
- Education and experience outside Canada is not valued
- There is a bias in immigration with respect to various cultures
- Humiliating experience with immigration on entry
- More experiences of discrimination at Nova Scotian airports
- No media representation except disaster and poverty—all negative
- Blackness is stereotyped here and you have to fit into that mould
- Have to deal with the accent problem

"The Black man is always carrying the emblem of Blackness, emblem of racism and is always being regarded as an offspring of the former slaves. So that's the perspective with which you are looked at. So now you have to prove yourself, that you are not negative, you are positive. But the white immigrant is looked upon as capable of performing, so you don't have anything to prove, so we have a greater uphill task."

"When some immigrants come here from, let's say Scotland or Ireland, they have accents too, but people say 'oh yeah' my grandfather was from there, they always feel at home. It's very hard, you can't even reconcile, you can't tell your story or your story is not heard. I tell somebody I am from some country in Africa, they react as if Africa is some different universe. So you start talking and nobody understands you and they say, 'Oh Canada is a very nice country', and you are cut short. You may have knowledge and education, I used to be a (bank) branch manager when I was back home but (now)......It was shocking, I couldn't believe it. It doesn't make sense."

"A reporter comes back from Africa with pictures of beggars on the streets, but when you walk down Spring Garden Road, I'm sure you'll find some beggars. If somebody says that there are beggars on the streets of African cities, is he telling the truth? Of course, but why doesn't he talk about the beggars on Spring Garden Road? Is it different just because we call them panhandlers here? I don't know how to correct this situation."

"Africa is everything the rest of the world is, not just poverty and theft."

"I was kind of disappointed that even the poorest person saw himself better than me, everybody stereotypes Blackness, and everybody says, 'oh she is Black' and they put you in molds."

Participants felt disappointed at the amount of misinformation surrounding Africa. At the same time, immigrants from the Caribbean and South America felt that the majority of Canadians know about the Caribbean and South American culture and have a positive impression as they are geographically closer to Canada and many Canadians travel there for business and leisure.

"In terms of cultural welcoming unfortunately there was no program in place directed at welcoming African immigrants."

"When I first came to Canada, there was a great difference between a white immigrant I knew and myself. We both came in the same month and there was a welcome wagon that was helping her in adjusting to the new place and all that, and I had nothing. She had help, that is just the way how it was. I have no explanation for that."

"Last year I spoke to my child's teacher and told her that my child does not celebrate Halloween, the teacher sort of put a spot on my child and she always picked on him and said, 'oh you are the kind that does not celebrate Halloween.' I went to see her and told her don't you think I have a right of choosing, why do you always pick on our children. There are so many people here that are Muslim that don't celebrate Christmas and so many Christians that don't celebrate Halloween. All I'm saying is that there is no one to address our needs on the government side, we arrive here, are dumped here, 'go and find your way...'

"Regarding race, you can see by the way people look at you in the bus, the way the bus driver looks at you, the way the bus driver behaves, that's racism."

"Racism is apparent and a lot is hidden, but the treatment is different when people get to know you."

"I am sure it is being done, but it is being done discreetly, and that is still discrimination."

"The history of Canadian immigration policy is one of racism and exploitation. Immigration has been used as an important part of Canadian economic and social policy for centuries. Every group of new immigrants has been allowed into Canada to satisfy a specific need, from the use of Chinese immigrants to build railways and Eastern Europeans to farm the Prairies, to the use of Italians to fulfill the employment needs of the construction industry. At the same time, every new wave of immigrants has been treated with hostility and suspicion."[37]

Immigration

"When you come in at the airport, they always conduct a random search, it is not a random search, it's always on the immigrants. Every time my husband travels he gets searched at the airports - always - always."

"Surprisingly the same government officers who confiscated my food at the airports, are living in the same society where some people are selling the same food. So I ask what is the difference. Nova Scotia is still backward in terms of culture. If you go to a city like Toronto or Montreal, there is nothing from your ethnic background that you will not be able to find in the stores."

Employment Equity policies and job opportunities were identified as barriers to obtaining equality. Employment equity requires that all individuals are treated fairly in the workplace so that everyone has full and equal access to employment opportunities. Results from both the focus groups and the questionnaire emphasized that employers must begin by recognizing the inequalities that have become a structured part of our employment systems. This can only happen if the government enforces the Employment Equity policy and begins by educating employers on the benefits of hiring employees from African countries. Concerns were also expressed that some employment equity initiatives are not working because businesses were not being held accountable. It takes up to 10 years for the average immigrant to become fully integrated into the labor force. The more highly educated the newcomer, the longer it may take to find appropriate employment.[38]

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[37] The Closed Doors: Racism and Immigration, CLC Anti-Racism Task Force, Canadian Labour Congress, 1997.

Jobs

"When it comes to jobs. I don't think I can get Canadian experience on the airplane coming here. I reach here and I started looking for a job. They ask me, 'Do you have Canadian experience?' Where am I expected to get it from? Because of my accent and from the way I talk and the way I reason, this disqualifies me. For example. I applied for a job as a cleaner, they asked me, 'have I ever used machines?' I used to use my hands, and I was told, 'Oh! that too backward'. He didn't even care, he just said that's backward, and to me that is another way of pushing me away. In my country you cannot do that, that would be impolite. Even if you don't like the person, you have to find a way to make him/her feel more comfortable."

The above anecdote also highlights a factor that complicates cross-cultural discussion: the difference in communication patterns. Canadians are from an individualistic low context culture and have a direct verbal style while most Africans are from collectivistic high context societies with an indirect verbal style. (Refer to Table 5, page 21)

Research shows that on average immigrants consume fewer social services than Canadian-born residents. In 1987, only 3.5 per cent of immigrants received social assistance, compared with 5.5 per cent of people born in Canada.[39]

"A lot of people tend to look at immigrants, especially Black immigrants as people who are coming to take away jobs. We should do a statistical study on this. A study on how many of us receive social assistance and for how long."

Sometimes cultural and racial differences are viewed generally as causing problems rather than creating advantages for the organization. Creativity can be stifled by the common belief that the way the organization has always done things is the best way—and that all employees should conform to the status quo. Cultural and racial differences, however, can be used to the advantage of the organization. Diverse perspectives and experiences can contribute greatly to innovative problemsolving and decision making.[40]

"When looking for work they need Canadians who studied in Canada. It is a form of discrimination. Getting a job is difficult, but once they get to know you, they treat you differently, for example when I left previous jobs, my employers have asked me to find replacements from my own culture."

"If Canadians are not ready for immigrants, it is a disappointment, it disqualifies the opportunity."

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38 Frank 2001.

39 Boyd, Joselyn. Racism. Whose Problem Is It Anyway. Metro Coalition for a Non-Racist Society. Halifax. Nova Scotia. 1998.

40 Meade, Catherine Akilah, Editor, Employment Equity for Visible Minority Women. Urban Alliance on Race Relations and Ontario Women's Directorate. 1986.

Media

During all the focus group discussions there was an overwhelming criticism of the media's portrayal of Africa and persons of African origins. Participants felt that a one-sided, biased view is being presented; that of poverty, jungles, and drought, a view that does not do justice to Africans.

As research suggests, the master narratives and images circulated by mainstream journalists, editors and publishers, producers and others involved in cultural production are not the narratives and central images that African Canadians, Asian Canadians, and Aboriginal peoples, among other people of colour, would present of themselves.[41]

Negative Publicity

"The media is leading a lot of Black Nova Scotians to be ashamed of Africa due to the negative publicity of Africa. If you open the television, it shows children in Africa - that is not all about what Africa is about, it is not about children that have no parents, it's not about AIDS, it's not about peace, it's not about drug use. Africa is everything that the rest of the world is. Africa shouldn't be different. The government has to try to create a forum that would enable black Nova Scotians to understand more about Africa from Africans themselves. The government should form a project for African Nova Scotians to visit Africa so that they can be proud of themselves because the negative publicity affects them, they already have a checkered past that made them ashamed, 'we are offspring of the slaves, I came here because my grandparents, my uncles were slaves', this is devastating enough. They get asked, 'where did your grandparents come from', and they see this image on the television, it makes them lose faith completely about themselves, their cultural history. So the government should sponsor a project that can take them to Africa where they go to a part of Africa that is not at war right now, and see for themselves it's not what they see on TV. That would make them really proud, they would discover that they have something in them to be proud of and that would enable them to work out the discrimination problem that they experience here in Nova Scotia."

The media generally ignore people of colour, failing to report their activities of great or not-so-great importance. Events of cultural significance or leisure that are covered for the majority community, such as fishing derbies, model railroad shows or stamp exhibitions, do not have a counterpart in the coverage of minority groups. On the few occasions when reporters cover people of colour, they seem most interested in the sensational quality of an event or in the exotic characteristics of the persons involved. Alternating between denying or exaggerating their presence, the media create a strong psychological barrier between visible minorities and the rest of Canadian society.[42]

"Media is biased, hunger is the only image of Africa. When you get somebody coming from China the impression everyone has is of Tianmmen Square, look what happening in the Congo, the only image we have of Africa is of hunger. But hunger is man made, North America has as much a hand in it as anyone else. I don't know, I wish I could plead my case to the divine."

"Media is very negative, it needs to be unbiased and non-judgmental. French-based media is positive toward Africa."

[41] Frances Henry; Carol Tator and Winston Mattis, Challenging Racism in the Arts: Case Studies in Controversy and Conflict, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1998.

[42] Equality Now, Report of the Special Committee on Visible Minorities in Canadian Society, Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Hull, Quebec, 1984.

"Media creates a greater need to explain ourselves to people, we need to regard and understand each other and stop the negative publicity."

Parent–Child Relationship

All families transmit a particular "version" of culture to their children. This version is influenced by personality, sex, socio-economic class, religion, education, and political beliefs of the parents. For example, African parents bring up their children with expectations of sharing more family responsibilities than some other parents in Canadian society. Thus, within any given culture, children may be socialized in a variety of styles and approaches. Regardless of the family or cultural context in which children are socialized, the task of the family in this process is universal. This task is to interpret to children the values, beliefs and appropriate behaviour patterns of their culture. The task for children is to acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills which will enable them to participate effectively in the cultural life of the family and later, in the cultural life of the larger community.[43]

The following questions were asked under the parent-child relationship section:

- Discuss similarities and differences between parenting in your home culture and Canadian ways of parenting.
- Have you maintained your traditional way of parenting and if so, has this created a conflict between you and your children?
- What part of Canadian culture do you not want your children to identify with?

Based on the responses the section has been divided into three categories:

- Cultural conflict
- Education
- Cultural norms among African Canadian immigrants

Cultural Conflict

Within each family, parents tend to bring up their children as they themselves were raised. Since the child-rearing patterns they learned from their own parents are the ones they know best, new parents contribute to cultural continuity by establishing similar patterns for their own children. It is in this manner that child rearing approaches serve to "pass on" or transmit culture to children.

"Culture is absorbed by children and indirect learning takes place in the community. Parenting roles change here. There is a need to be educated on the vast ways of doing things. The model here is not the best and ours is neither primitive nor superior. We do not expect the children not to learn the culture here, culture is learned by living."

"We were brought up with different values in a different country, for our children this is where they are living, so they have to know their values here and we want them to have some of our home values. Trying to balance the two sometimes raises conflict."

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[43] Chud, Gyda; Fahlman, Ruth. Early Childhood Education for A Multicultural Society, University of British Columbia, 1985.

Participants felt that it was more difficult for children to be brought up in an immigrant home as cultural values were the constant conflict. Parents also commented on the differences in parenting styles and the challenges arising from them. The parenting differences also reflect cultural differences. Canadian parents are more individualistic and give more freedom to their children. African parents come from a family-oriented collectivist background and prefer disciplining their children and seeing more respect for elders from their children.

"Parents (are) not passing on (their) culture because of larger community expectations, so (children are) losing own culture because of societal culture, therefore (there is a) need to recognize immigrant culture."

Parenting Values

"In terms of parenting value system, it is more difficult for the children raised in an immigrant home because you have the Canadian culture trying to compete with the culture you are trying to instill at home. So you have to learn to balance, for instance sleep-over, this is difficult for me but that is normal here. For me to allow my children to sleep at your home I really have to know who you are, here it means nothing, and then the child does not understand why you are being so difficult when everybody else is OK. I find it difficult when parents drop their child off at the door, it is just cultural differences. My culture tells me that if my child has to visit another home I have to talk to the parents, but here most of the time it is the child that calls your house to invite the child and it is the child that calls your house to borrow something. The parents are totally oblivious when you are making calls trying to exercise your value judgment, your child is looking at you as if something is wrong. They don't understand why you have to make sure that the parents on the other side of the fence have to know that his or my child is borrowing something. They don't understand it because it is not a norm in this society."

Cultural Norms and Parental Expectations

"Children have to respect their elders and always be polite and don't argue in front of any stranger."

"Where we come from you ask before you do, that's not the case here, in our eyes that shows lack of respect."

"In my home culture if you want to go out you would have to tell your parents in advance where you are going and what you are doing in case they have something for you to do. But here they just get up and say, 'Mom, we are leaving', and they leave. In the beginning it was very tough."

In-Home Culture

- There is no I, me, my, mine
- Child belongs to society
- Neighbours help
- Children are safe in communities
- Children are expected to help out at home, learning by experience/observation

Immigrant Parenting

- Parents are more strict and there is more respect for parents
- Religion forms the basis for values
- No use of the first name with elders
- Parents want to inculcate these values (source of conflict)
- Feel there is lack of respect for teachers
- Talking back to parents is the beginning of the fall
- Individualistic concerns are extreme here
- Too much government interference in family life
- Balancing the two cultures creates conflict

Culturally children do not call elders by their first names, they usually call them auntie or uncle or Mrs. so and so. My children's friends call me by my first name, and I tell them not to do so and now they don't."

"There is veil of ignorance for children in our home culture, children are well looked after and do not make individual decisions, decisions are community based."

"In our culture a child is safe in the community. Every adult protects a child whether he knows the child or not, but here when parents are walking their children the child is looking at me, obviously I am different, and the child is asking a question and we can communicate and the child wants to know who I am, but the mother quickly tells them 'come here', just like chicken protecting the chicks from an animal, it's very hurtful. But I don't know what kind of experience these people have had, but we don't do that back home, especially because children are innocent."

Education

Another cultural barrier is the reduced status of new Canadians entering the school system. In their home countries, students have an assured and comfortable place within the institutional framework. They know the rules and regulations, and the opportunities and constraints. Suddenly they are thrust into an environment where they have to learn what is acceptable in their approach to learning and their personal behaviour. New students suddenly find themselves alone in a sea of other young people in a highly competitive milieu. They have to learn a whole new way of looking at the world and acting to achieve in school. Many minority students become acutely aware of racial differences on arrival in the new society or at a school outside their home community.[44]

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[44] Thompson, Pat, Handbook on Cross Cultural Counselling, Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia, 1995.

Parenting Here

- Vast differences in perspectives
- Perspectives change with time
- Parental style is different
- Nucleus family
- Centrality of Mom & Dad
- Shared responsibility
- Overwhelmed here
- Try to retain good aspects of value system and encourage children also
- Very difficult to do so with children
- Children suffer a lot trying to balance the two cultures
- Especially children born here and brought in an immigrant home

"My son-you have to be cool, you have to be that; it was the hardest thing in my life, the schools are not providing. I really pity my children, sometimes I fight a losing battle because in schools you try to integrate and then you learn you have to try to hide yourself, you can't hide your accent and you can't change your colour."

"Growing up a lot of children in Junior High would curse around their parents, that was something I could not do. Most of my other immigrant friends faced similar parenting issues. When we look back and talk with people from my background and we share stories about growing up here, we laugh about it, we all went through the same thing and we all thought we were the only person going through it."

A common theme in the discussions on parenting reveals that African parenting styles differ from Canadian parenting styles. What might be excepted as a norm in African countries is sometimes not acceptable according to Canadian law and parents are often caught off guard, as they are not aware of the law regarding codes of discipline. Parents strongly felt that there was too much government interference in family affairs. While acknowledging that measures have to be put in place to safeguard the rights of children, parents felt that the law should be flexible to give consideration to cultural variations. Some parents felt that in the efforts to safeguard children's rights, parents' rights had been sacrificed.

"Halloween is one of the celebrations we have to participate in and that poses a challenge for children in the school system. Some teachers have little sensitivity about children from different cultures."

"Parents don't like teachers asking personal questions so there is a need for demarcation between school and family."

"There is a difference between disciplining and intentional harm and I think the law gets mixed up between disciplining and harming a child."

Multiculturalism

When the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed into law in 1988, it established that our multicultural diversity is a fundamental characteristic of our society, an essential part of what it means to be Canadian.[45]

Even though Canada was the first country to adopt multiculturalism as its official policy, there is a history of social, cultural, and economic discrimination against visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples. Immigration policies, in the past, generally discriminated against persons of colour.[46]

The following questions were asked in the section on multiculturalism:

- Have you heard about the Multicultural Policy? Do you feel it is working?
- Can you identify any barriers of discrimination and prejudice which limit your participation?
- Can you suggest ways in which the Government can promote the policy and increase public awareness of the contributions made by ethnic communities?
- What steps would you like the government to take on behalf of the African Canadian immigrant to better serve your cultural needs?

Based on their responses, this section was divided into three categories:

- Implementation and accountability
- Song and dance
- Education

Implementation and Accountability

Even though Canada is one of the rare countries that has a multicultural policy, with Nova Scotia being the first province to have a provincial bill promoting multiculturalism (Bill C-9), it is evident from the comments that most participants did not feel that the policies were being implemented.

"It might be the best policy in the whole world, the question is how do you implement it. What is the intent and the objective, and are you measuring the objectives, whether you are achieving what you are saying or is it just there as a window dressing. Along with the multicultural policy, I would like to put the Employment Equity Act, there is no force behind it to make it work and if its not working - why is it not working?"

"To make it work the policy needs policing and accountability, there must be a way of accessing the success or failure of the policy. More often than not the policies are there, the people that are supposed to implement them are not doing it, that's why the multicultural policy does not work and employment equity does not work."

"In relation to multiculturalism, there is a difference between knowing rights, lots of people know their rights; the question is, are they being valued?"

(45 The Canadian Multiculturalism Act. A Guide for Canadians. Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada. 1990.)
(46 Lock; Milan; Schjetagne 2000.)

"The policy is there, the question is, the people that are suppose to implement them are not doing it and nobody is coming back to them and find out why they are not doing it. Unless you build in all the mechanism, the policy itself is just a public relations exercise."

"Immigrants are an educated group that can contribute, but face problems, therefore Canada does not get optimum benefits."

"Yes I have heard of it but not of its application."

"It's a policy, that's something that sounds good on paper, written on paper."

Song and Dance

Participants felt that multiculturalism has often come to mean something that is quite superficial; dance, dress and food. Focus should be on how these expressions relate to culture: the values and the power relationships that shape the culture.

"People seem stuck up with entertainment aspect of culture, it seems exotic. We have much more to offer than dance and food. Those are really demeaning things if you think that is only what we have of offer."

"If I came to an office looking for some proposal or work in our cultural dress, we may not be welcome. That same fellow will probably come and see our children dance at the multicultural festival."

"I don't take part in community associations because I believe culture is more than just food and drink but, in these associations there isn't anything else other than that."

- Vague, haphazard policy
- Concept of this policy not understood
- Most often not implemented, no built in corrective measure so it becomes only PR
- Dormant policy
- Lack of information—gap in services
- Need for change in perspective
- Yes lots of air written on paper
- Would like to see things happen

Education

Most of the focus group participants stressed the need for multicultural information dissemination. It was felt that programs focusing on multicultural anti-racist education should not be an added-on preposition, rather it should be an integral part of the curriculum in all subject areas. Also, cross-cultural sensitivity training should be provided to government workers, as well as all employees working with the public.

"In schools they are trying to work things out. For example, Multicultural days, African Heritage Month, Mi'kmaq Heritage Month. There is a need to educate children. Maybe they will grow up with less discrimination. We need to look at the long term."

"I just find that most Canadians don't understand the importance of multiculturalism, they don't understand why it is important, why we have it on paper, even if it is not really active anyway. Some people feel that we should be able to assimilate."

"Once adventuresome immigrants have arrived, Canada must persuade them to stay put. Areas like Atlantic Canada have long seen their native-born population move to richer parts of the country; now immigrants populations are on the same trail. The region accounts for about 8% of the total Canadian population, yet attracted less than 2% of the country's immigrants in 1998. That only indicates where they arrived, not where they intended to settle permanently, according to Nabiha Atallah, program manager of the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association in Halifax."[47]

"Society here seems like a closed web where one cannot progress, many have given up and left. It is the responsibility of authorities. We come with devotion and hope, to be frustrated and become of no use to the Nova Scotian government or immigrants. And when we cannot take these frustrations anymore, we move on. I have been told many times to get out of Nova Scotia."

"Policy will not work without education about Africa by Africans to Canadians."

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[47] Frank 2001.

Part 3—Questionnaire Survey: A Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis

The culture component of the questionnaire was divided into four sections:

- retaining and promoting culture
- parent-child relationship
- cultural orientations
- participant information

Participants were asked to rank the various aspects of culture based on their level of importance.

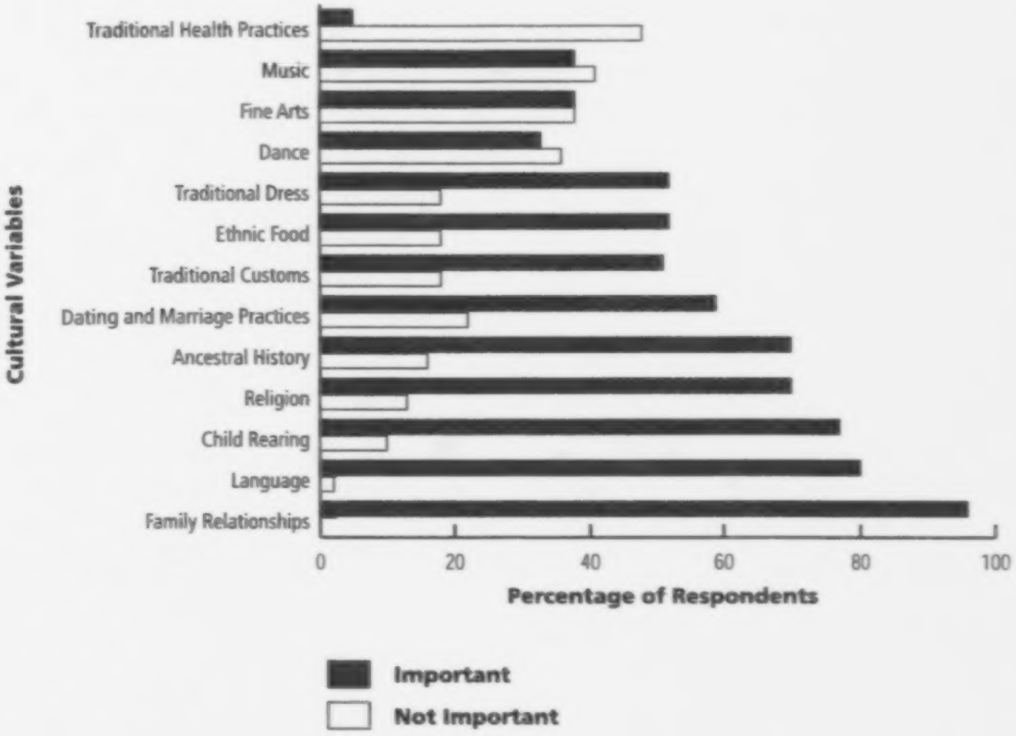
Retaining and Promoting Culture

This section of the questionnaire had four questions.

Question 1

"From the following list please rank the various aspects of your culture that you would like to retain based on their level of importance." The most important values were found to be Family Relationships (95%), Language (80%), Child Rearing (75%), Religion (68%) and Ancestral History (68%) See Figure 1. (68%)(68%).

Figure 1: Preferred Cultural Aspects for Retention

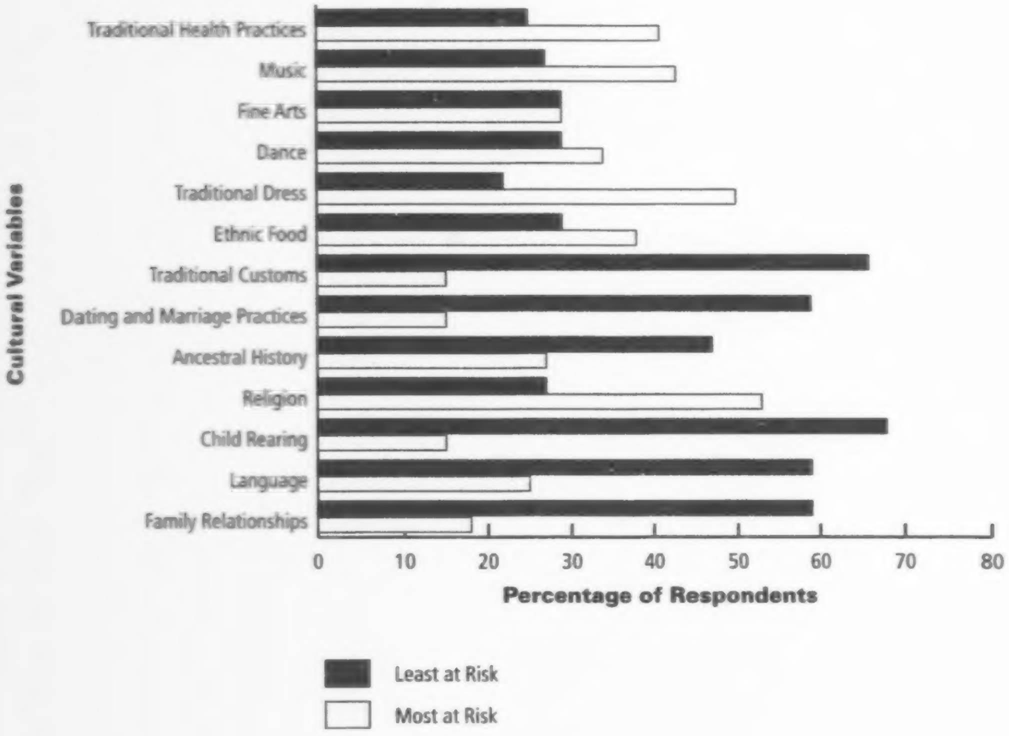


The cultural value that was found to be least important was Traditional Health Practices (48%). Music, Fine Arts, and Dance also ranked low in terms of importance. A similar opinion was voiced in the focus group discussion on multiculturalism where participants felt that their culture was much more than just music and dance. As the Cultural Iceberg (pg. 147) shows, music and dance form a part of the visible aspects of culture and African Canadian Immigrants are more interested in retaining the invisible, deeper cultural values that guide their decision making and daily living.

Question 2

"What aspects of your culture do you feel/perceive are most at risk of being lost?" (See Figure 2.) The cultural values that were found to be most at risk were Child Rearing (68%), Traditional Customs (66%), Dating and Marriage Practices (59%), Family Relationships (59%) and Languages (59%). The cultural aspects that were found to be least at risk were Religion (52%), Traditional Dress (50%) and Music (43%). As the focus group discussions showed, immigrants try to retain the certain aspects of their culture in the home environment. At the same time, they are also finding it difficult to pass on these cultural values to the next generation and therefore, they perceive traditional customs, family relationships and languages to be at risk of being lost.

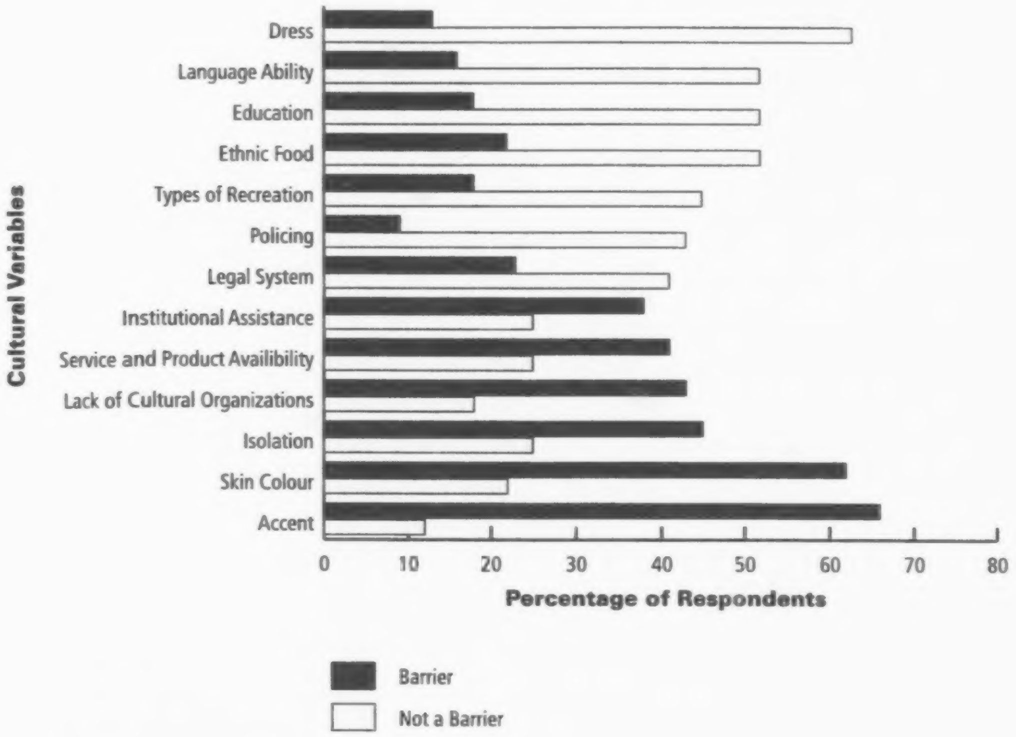
Figure 2: Cultural Values Most at Risk



Question 3

"Since arriving in Canada what conditions have acted as barriers in finding a level of comfort?" (See Figure 3.) The biggest barriers for the participants were found to be Accent (66%), Skin Colour (61%), Isolation (45%) and Lack of Cultural Organizations (43%). The factors that were found not to be impediments in finding a level of comfort in Canada were Dress (64%), Language Ability (52%), Education (52%) and Ethnic Food (52%). Policing was not found to be a barrier, with only 9% of the respondents feeling that it was, while 43% responded otherwise. Focus group participants voiced a similar opinion. They found that accent was a major barrier to communication and hence a barrier to finding a level of comfort. They also felt discriminated against based on their skin colour. Most focus group participants felt isolated upon arrival in Nova Scotia and did not find appropriate organizations to support their cultural needs.

Figure 3: Barriers in Finding Comfort



Question 4

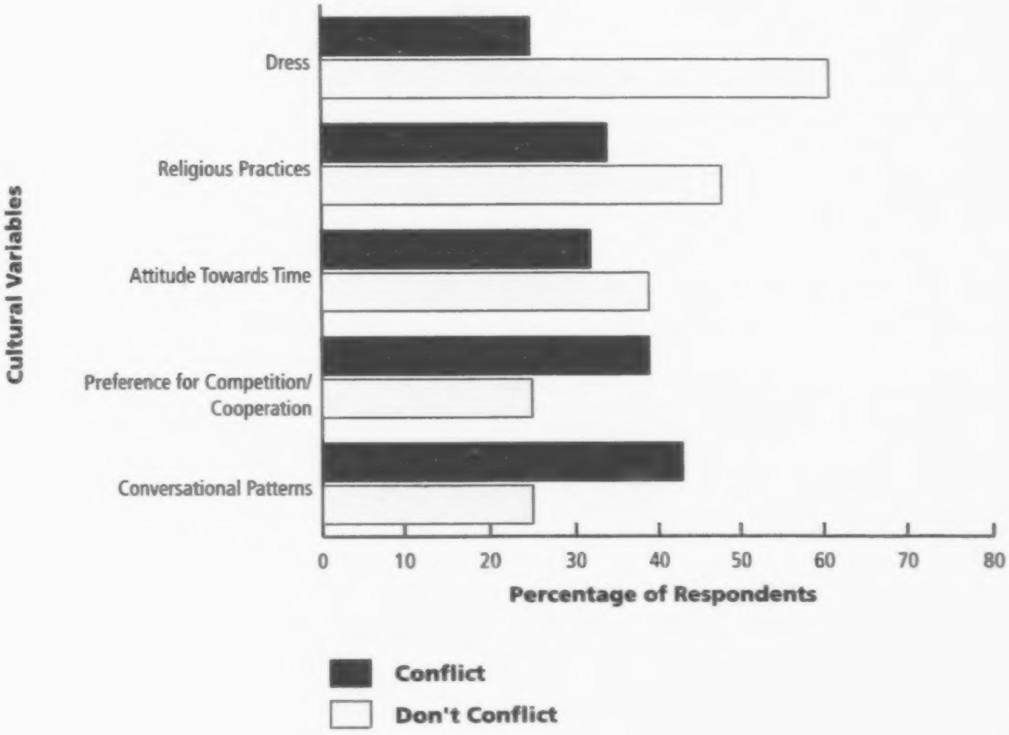
"In your daily life, what aspects of your culture conflict with the Canadian way of doing things?" The aspects that conflict the most are Conversational Patterns (43%) and Preference for Competition or Cooperation (39%).

The conflict in conversational patterns highlights the importance of understanding communication differences. As Table 5 (page 156) indicates, in the Canadian communication pattern, the message is explicit, quantity of talk is moderate, and informal, whereas most African Canadian immigrants have a communication pattern where the message is more implicit and formal and quantity of talk is high and includes detail.

The factors that do not conflict are Dress (61%) and Religious Practices (48%).

Focus group participants felt that religion formed the basis for their values. As many participants did not perceive their religious practices to be at conflict in Nova Scotia, it helps explain why in question 2 of the questionnaire African Canadian immigrants did not perceive their religion to be at-risk of being lost.

Figure 4: Native Cultural Values that Conflict with Canadian Cultural Values



Parent–Child Relationship

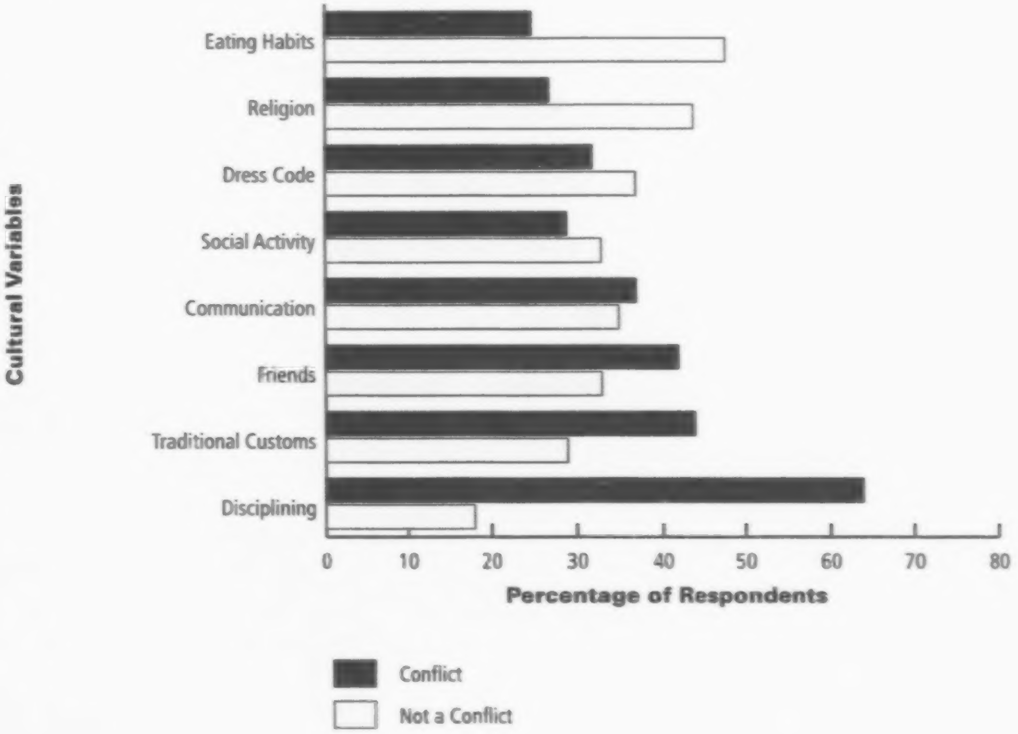
This section had three questions, two quantitative and one qualitative.

Question 5

"Which aspects of your culture create a conflict in the parent-child relationship?" The biggest conflict seem to arise in the areas of Disciplining (64%), Traditional Customs (43%) and Friends (41%). The cultural values that do not seem to create conflict in the parent-child relationship are Eating Habits (48%) and Religion (43%). (See Figure 5.)

Focus group responses suggest that traditional customs and disciplining are a major area of conflict in the parent-child relationship, as parents try to maintain their traditional values whereas immigrant children are exposed to two cultures, within the home environment and outside and are constantly trying to balance the two cultures. Traditional customs conflict in the parent-child relationship. This also helps explain why traditional customs and family relationships were perceived by respondents to be at risk in question 2.

Figure 5: Aspects of Conflict in Parent–Child Relationship

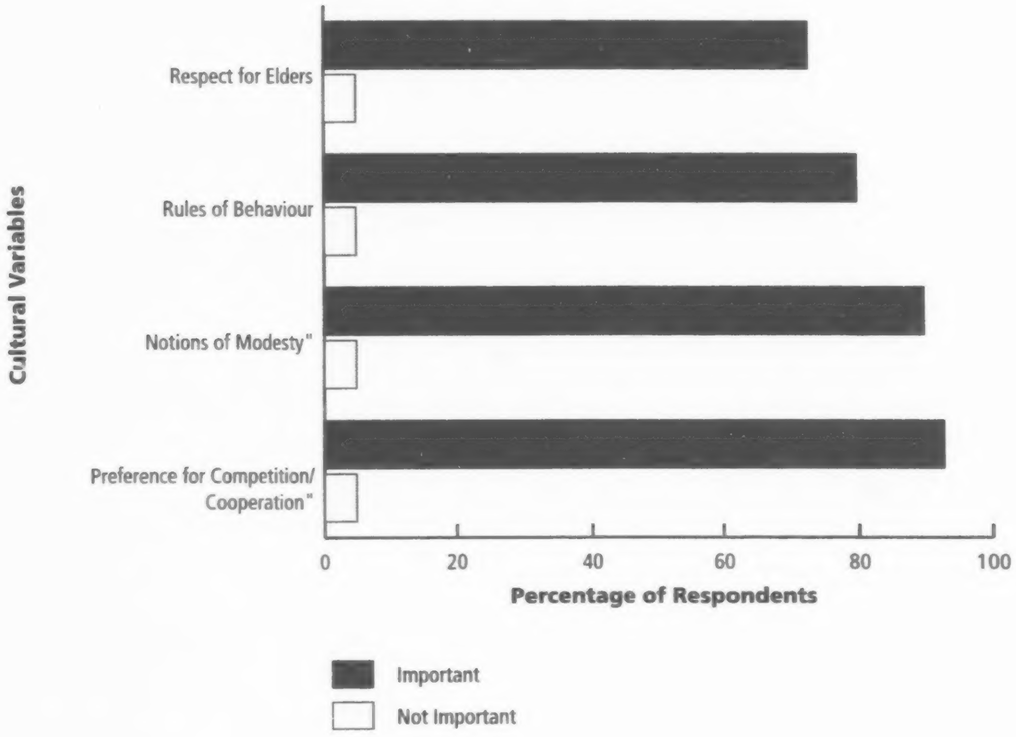


Question 6

"As a parent (or future parent) what aspects of the traditional cultural parent-child relationship would you like to see maintained?" As is evident from Figure 6, participants indicated that it was important to maintain all the traditional cultural values mentioned in the questionnaire.

Similarly focus group participants want to see their children grow up with traditional values but also realize the need to balance the two cultures.

Figure 6: Maintain Traditional Values in Parent-Child Relationships



Question 7

Participants were asked to share their thoughts on parent-child relationships. The responses given, paint a similar picture to the responses from the focus group sessions on parent-child relationships.

Many respondents stressed the importance of mutual respect in the parent-child relationship. The importance of discipline and maintaining traditional parenting style was also stressed. Respondents also highlighted the difficulties of balancing two cultures, and expressed concern about peer pressure faced by their children.

"Conflict emerges when child's behaviour bends towards 'new' friends/peers while parents reaction is based on the 'norms' from the homeland."

"Our children follow and adapt the behaviour patterns of their Canadian friends. Our children compare their parents to their friends' parents—expecting us to be like them."

"There will not be a big conflict between the parent and their children if both keep their own culture."

"Relationships are strained mostly due to different expectations on both sides. Children want to grow up and live by Canadian standards because of minimal exposure to traditional societal trends."

Section C: Value Orientations

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's Variations in Value Orientations.[48]

American anthropologists Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck developed a framework of six dimensions to describe the value orientation of a culture. The value orientations represent how different societies cope with various issues or problems.

- Relation to nature
- Time orientation
- Basic human nature
- Activity orientation
- Relationship among people
- Space orientation

This study incorporated the first five value orientations developed by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck.

Section C of the questionnaire was developed to collect data to compare the Canadian and African value orientations. For each value orientation, participants were asked to choose one statement which identified their cultural orientation.

As the participants themselves are from many African origins and cultures, and not from one 'African culture', we do not find overwhelming proof for one type of value orientation. What the responses indicate is that many, if not most, African Canadian immigrants view themselves in a particular value orientation.

Relation to Nature

A culture can cope with its relation to nature through: 1) subjugation to it, 2) harmony with it, or 3) mastery of it.

For example the Inuit culture of Canada and United States has a subjugation orientation, because they accept nature as it is and see whatever happens to them as inevitable. A culture that is in harmony with nature, such as the Chinese, attempt to orient behaviour to coexist with nature. Mastery cultures, such as in North America and Western Europe, attempt to change aspects of the environment through technology when necessary or desirable.

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[48] This section is based primarily on Frencesco, Gold 1997.

Question 1: Relation to Nature

Which one of the following statements do you agree with most?

In our home culture:

- We have little control over the environment surrounding us.
- We co-exist with nature in a harmonious manner and adapt to it.
- It is acceptable to change aspects of the environment through technology when necessary or desirable.

Participant Response:

Subjugation 19%, Harmony 50%, Mastery 31%

Some cultures, Canadian culture for example, demonstrate an almost equal preference for harmony and mastery in relation to nature. Canadians accept the harsh winter weather of its geographic location but at the same time attempt to limit its effects through a wide range of modern techniques. Participant response suggests that most Africans have a similar value orientation, with 50% suggesting a harmony orientation and 31% a mastery orientation in relation to nature.

Time Orientation

The time orientation of a society focusses on the 1) past, 2) present or 3) future.

A past orientation emphasizes tradition and using time-honoured approaches. For example, Italians respect and value craftsmanship based on years of traditional practice. As the participant response suggests, most African Canadian immigrants have a past orientation. A present-oriented culture focuses on the short-term, for example, in United States and Canada, people are highly conscious of time, and businesses look at financial results quarterly. A future-oriented society emphasizes the long term For example in many large Japanese corporations employees are hired for life.

Question 2: Time Orientation

Which one of the following statements do you agree with most?

In our home culture:

- Our past traditional customs are of central importance.
- The present is more important than the future or the past.
- The future is more important than the present and the past.

Participant Response:

Past 67%, Present 14%, Future 19%

Basic Human Nature

A culture's belief about people can be 1) good, 2) evil or 3) neutral/mixed.

A society seeing good in people is basically a trusting one. For example in Japan executives often trust each other enough to make only verbal agreements for major business deals. In a culture that believes that people are basically evil, there is a lack of trust. New Yorkers are skeptical in making business deals and are careful to guard against being cheated.

Question 3: Basic Human Nature

Which one of the following statements do you agree with most?

When negotiating a business contract back home:

- Trust exists and a verbal contract is deemed sufficient.
- One is careful to guard against being cheated.
- There is trust but it is important to be cautious to protect oneself.

Participant Response:

Good 24%, Evil 12%, Neutral/Mixed 64%

A mixed/neutral society like Canada believes that people are basically good; however, in some situations it is important to be cautious to protect oneself. In many parts of Canada, a legal contract accompanies verbal arrangements. Participant response suggests that the majority of African Canadian Immigrants have a 64% neutral/mixed value orientation.

Activity Orientation

A culture's activity orientation can be 1) doing, 2) being, or 3) containing/controlling.

In a doing culture, like that of United States and Canada emphasis is on action, achievement and working, and people want recognition for their accomplishments. In a being culture like Mexico emphasis is on enjoying life and working for the moment and people work to live rather than live to work. In a containing/controlling culture, like France, emphasis is on rationality and logic and people retrain their desires to attain a mind/body balance.

Question 4: Activity Orientation

Which one of the following statements do you agree with most?

In our home culture:

- Emphasis is on action, achievement and working.
- Emphasis is on spontaneous expression of emotions, desires and impulses, and we work to life rather live to work.
- We balance action and emotion to achieve a mind/body balance.

Participant Response:

Doing 26%, Being 24%, Containing/controlling 50%

The African Canadian immigrant culture demonstrates a preference for containing/controlling but participants also showed preference for the other two value orientations. This can be understood considering the diversity of respondents.

Relationships among People

Relationships among people can be 1) individualistic, 2) group or 3) hierarchical.

People in individualistic countries like Canada and United States define themselves through personal characteristics and achievements. In group-oriented societies, like Japan, a positive relationship to the collective is important. People relate to and take responsibility for the members of the family or community. Emphasis is on harmony, unity and loyalty.

Question 5: Relationships among People

Which one of the following statements do you agree with most?

In our home culture:

- Individual goals are more important than group goals.
- Decisions are made based on consensus and individuals goals are subordinate to group goals.
- We value group relationships, but lines of authority are clear and dominate subordinate relationships.

Participant Response:

Individualistic 14%, Group 24%, Hierarchical 62%

Hierarchical societies like India and of many African nations also value group relationships, but emphasize the relative ranking of groups within the society as a whole. As the participant response suggests, most African Canadian immigrants have a hierarchical value orientation.

Table 6 summarizes the variation in cultural orientations.

Table 6

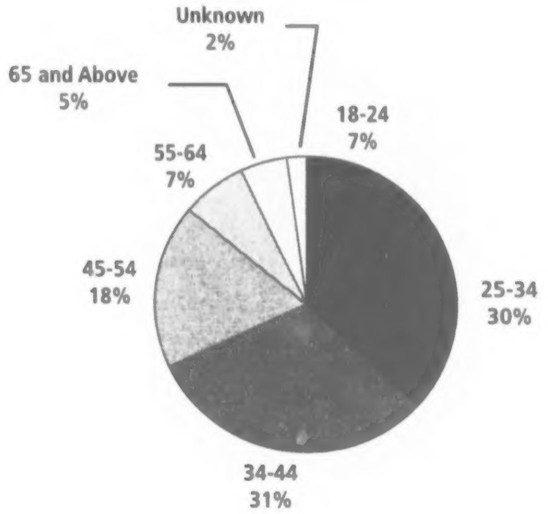
Value Orientations	Canada	Most African Cultures
Relation to Nature: Subjugation, Harmony,	MasteryHarmony/Mastery	Harmony/Mastery
Time Orientation: Past, Present, Future	Present	Past
Basic Human Nature: Good, Evil, Mixed/Neutral	Mixed/Neutral	Mixed/Neutral
Activity Orientation: Doing, Being, Containing/Controlling	Doing	Containing/Controlling
Relationship Among People: Individualistic, Group, Hierarchical	Individualistic	Hierarchical

Section D: Questionnaire Participant Data

Age, Sex and Marital status

More than half the respondents (61%) were from the 25-44 age bracket. Fifty four percent of the respondents were males and 41% were females, with 5% unknown. 62% of the participants were married and 25% had never been married.

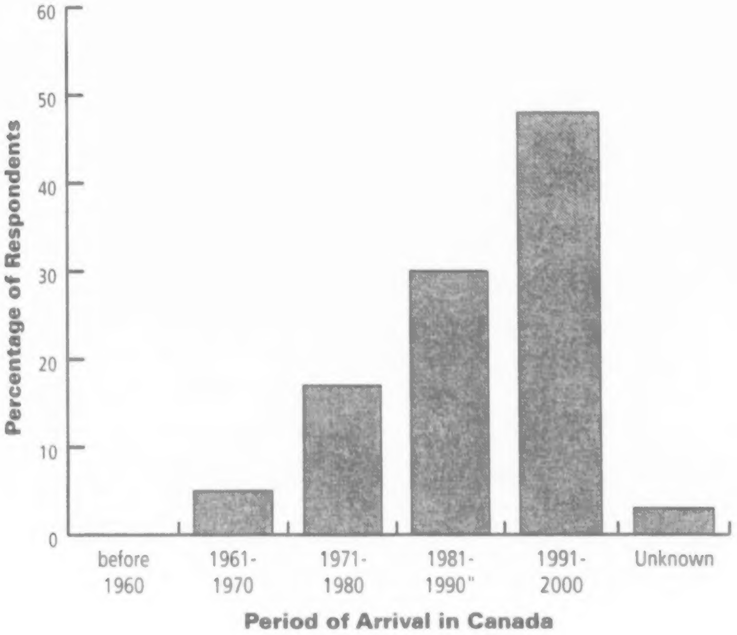
Age Group of Respondents



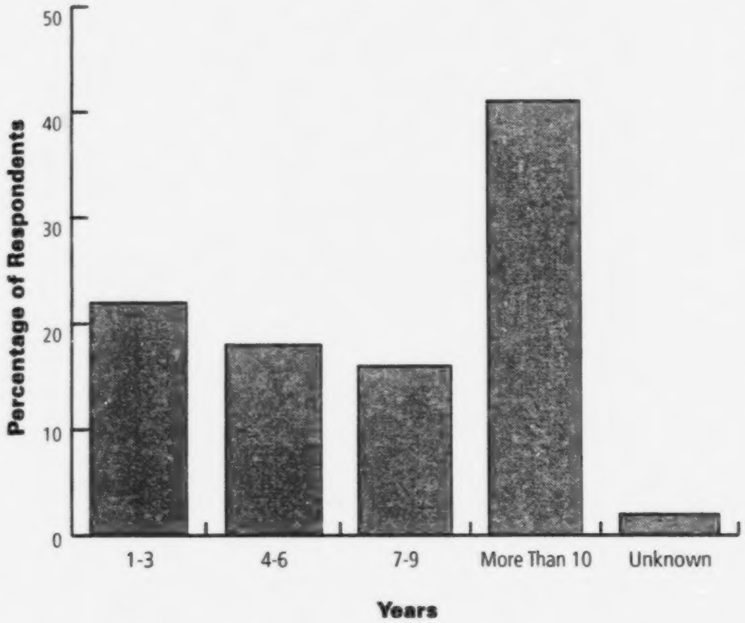
Period of Arrival

Nearly half the participants (48%) arrived in Canada in the last decade, and 30% arrived between 1980-1991, 41% of the participants have lived in Nova Scotia for more than 10 years, with 23% having arrived in the last 3 years.

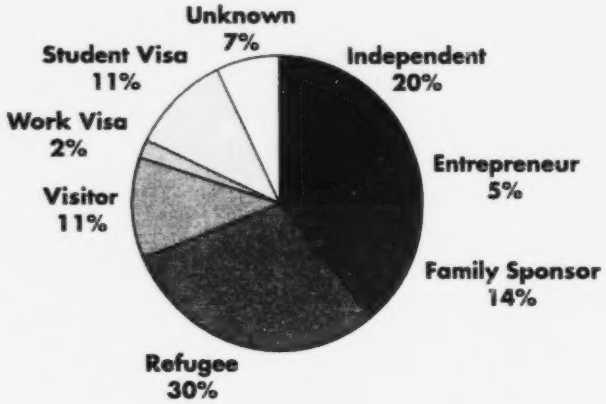
Period of Arrival in Canada



Number of Years Lived in Nova Scotia



Immigration Status upon Entry



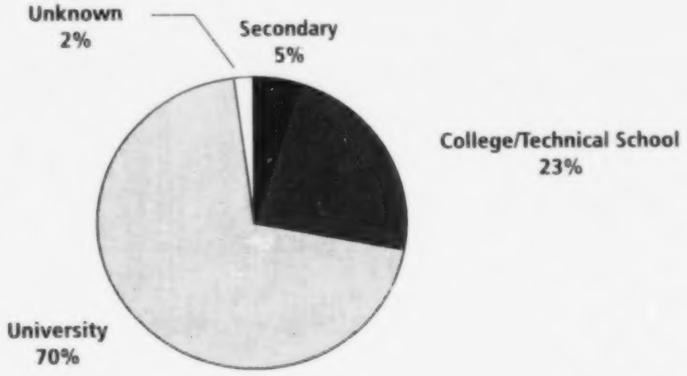
Immigration

The biggest group of immigrants were refugees (30%), followed by independent immigrants (20%), family sponsored (14%). Only 11% of the participants came to Canada as students.

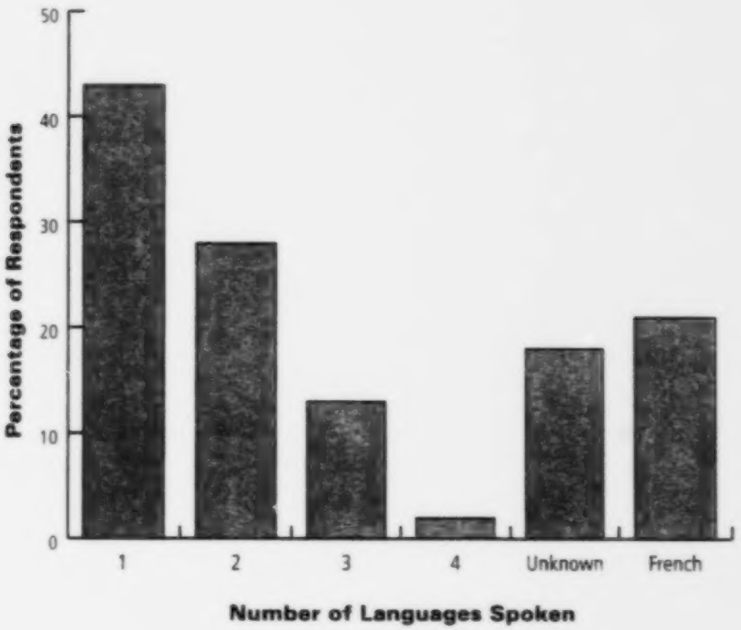
Education

Respondents to the questionnaire were well educated: 70% had university education and 23% had attended college or a technical school.

Education Level of Participants



Additional Languages Spoken



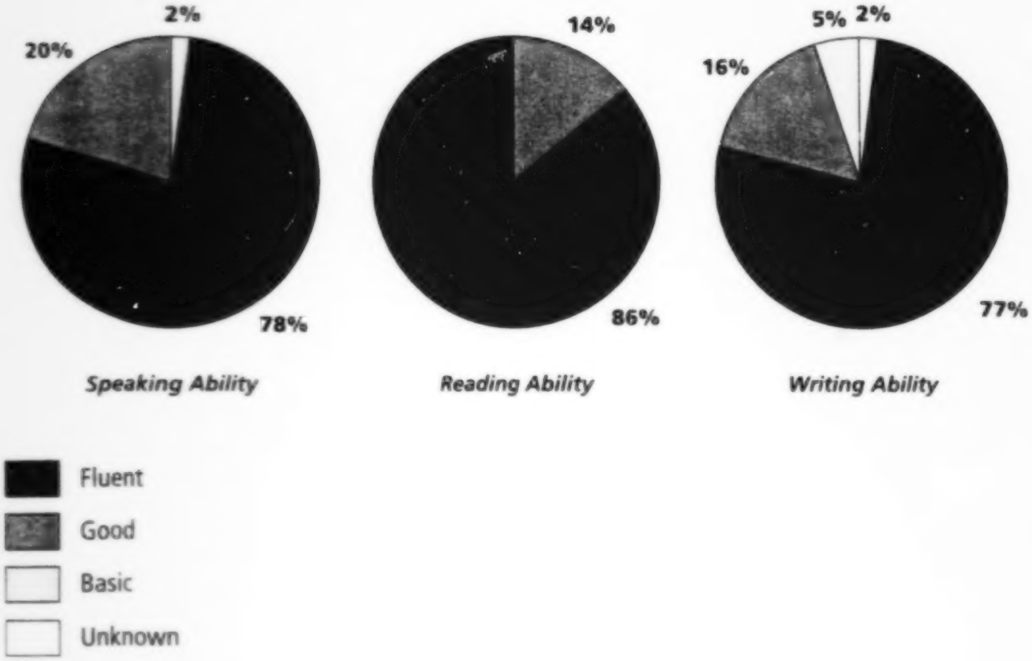
Language Ability

Twenty per cent of the participants were officially bilingual (French and English), with 43% speaking at least one additional language, and 27% spoke 2 additional languages.

English

As is evident from the pie charts, most participants are fluent in reading (86%), writing (77%) and speaking (78%) English.

Abilities



Speaking Ability

Reading Ability

Writing Ability

Part 4—Recommendations

These recommendations are based upon the feedback received from focus group participants and questionnaire respondents, and upon the observations of the researchers.

The recommendations are intended to help ameliorate the situation of African Canadian immigrants here in Nova Scotia. They are primarily targeted at dealing with culture shock, retaining and promoting culture, and promoting multiculturalism. All these areas are interrelated and have some common linkages, therefore they have common solutions.

Programs and Services

- The government should ensure that the cultural needs of African Canadian immigrants are met through the provision of a community organization whose sole responsibility would be to service the needs of African Canadian immigrants. This can also be achieved by funding existing organizations for programs designed for African Canadian Immigrants.
- Government funding should be tied to program evaluation and coordination among existing organizations. It is also important that input for these programs and services is provided through consultations with African Canadian Immigrants.

Education

School System

- Develop curriculum on African history and cross-cultural understanding, mandating all students to take a minimum of one credit. It is recommended that instructors of the African history course should be of African heritage.
- Encourage celebration of cultural diversity throughout the year rather than relegating it to one day or one month, for example, Multicultural Heritage Day or Black History Month.
- Incorporate multicultural/anti-racist courses in all teacher training institutions and mandate all education students (teachers in training) to successfully complete at least one course.

Community

- There is a need to tackle the lack of information and misinformation about Africa, by sponsoring more public presentations, information sessions and cultural events.
- Information on multiculturalism, employment equity and human rights must be made readily available to all government agencies in the form of reports and brochures.
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity training should be provided to all service providers.
- Government should acknowledge and make known the contributions of visible minorities.

African Community

The government should encourage and fund educational and social programs that will tie African Canadian immigrant children to their heritage. This can be accomplished by providing funding for weekend programs for language and cultural training.

Services for New Immigrants

- The government should have in place programs to acquaint new immigrants to life in Nova Scotia and how to integrate into society. This could take the form of buddy system, assigning mentors, host family programs and culturally appropriate welcome wagon.
- Information on programs and services for new immigrants should be provided through various service agencies and advertised in community and mainstream media.
- Programs designed for new African immigrants by Citizenship and Immigration Canada should have input from the African Canadian immigrant community.

Information Package/Brochures

- The government could make available practical information on the different facets of Canadian life to immigrants. This information can be disseminated in the form of presentations and information packages to successful immigrants applicants, either before or upon arrival in Nova Scotia.
- The government should develop brochures that tackle issues of concern to new immigrants. Brochures should be developed on
  - Variations in culture
  - Variations in communication and language use
  - Various laws, especially rights of children and parents
  - Settlement, e.g., how to rent an apartment upon arrival and medical system, etc.
  - Job searching services
  - Service providers and community associations
  - Information on how to access these services

Community Advisory Role

- The government needs to recognize the differences and similarities that exist among the various African cultures and develop and maintain programs and policies that involve African immigrants in decision making, thus enabling them to be full participants in society. This can be achieved by appointing culturally competent advisors to decision-making committees and boards whose activities/functions impact on African Immigrants in Nova Scotia.

- The government should encourage its elected officials to get in touch with new immigrants in their constituencies and inform them of the challenges facing new immigrants.
- The government needs to establish a mechanism to ensure the implementation of multiculturalism and employment equity policy by employers. There has to be a framework to hold organizations accountable for implementation of government initiatives in this area.

Media Coverage

- Government should provide incentives to produce programs that portray the beauty of Africa and also cover the community events of African Canadian immigrants in a positive light.
- Local media should also serve the needs of African immigrants by providing news and information on their native countries.
- There is also a strong need to have a media watchdog to monitor coverage of African countries to ensure an unbiased presentation.

Immigration

- There is a need to further investigate immigration policy and procedures with regard to Africans.
- Immigration Canada needs to have more racially visible people employed in customer service and decision-making departments.
- The department of immigration should have a program to market Canada through its embassies in Africa.

Career Initiatives

- Foreign credentials should be recognized and equal work opportunities should be provided to immigrants based on education and work experience.
- The government should provide entrepreneurship training to all interested immigrants, not only to immigrants who come here as entrepreneurs.

Conclusions

Retaining and promoting culture is a long-term process. Immigrants come with a lot of hope and expectation to begin a new chapter in their lives. It takes time to deal with the initial shock experienced upon arrival and takes years for an immigrant to settle down. Most new immigrants have to deal with a lot of uncertainty in their new surroundings. The first few experiences go a long way in determining how quickly an individual will find a certain level of comfort and a sense of belonging in his/her new country. It is therefore fundamental that policies, programs and services are in place for immigration objectives to succeed. Steps have to be taken to ensure that the needs of African Canadian immigrants are understood and catered to. This requires a conscious effort on behalf of government and citizens.

One of the common themes in all focus groups was the need for the government to make known the contributions made by immigrants. It is important that Canadians are informed about the history, people, and culture of Africans. It is equally important that this education is done by people who have first-hand experience of Africa. Education is the key towards a more multicultural and accepting society. With education, people's biases can be deconstructed and a foundation established for cross-cultural understanding. This education needs to filter through the education system into institutions and service providers. The initiative for this has to come from the government, as is suggested by the following focus group quote:

"I think if the government could consciously and purposefully take steps—appropriate ones—to lessen discrimination/racism, that would go a long way."

As the discussions in the focus groups and the questionnaire responses show, African Canadian immigrants face a lot of challenges in their efforts to retain and promote their culture. The government needs to do more than just acknowledge the cultural diversity that exists in the province and take steps towards utilizing the massive potential of the immigrants. As one of the questionnaire responses indicated:

"Put in practice what is already there. Stop wasting time and money on study after study—let's see action."

African Canadian immigrants also need to understand the cultural variations between their home culture and the culture surrounding them. This understanding will lead to better interaction and communication. It is hoped that the cultural framework analysis provided in Chapter One of this report will serve as an introduction to better understanding.

It is important that individuals from all cultural backgrounds take it upon themselves to learn, understand, appreciate, and respect other cultures. (See Appendix 3: Towards Cultural Compentence on page 207.)

While the recommendations have been developed primarily for the government, at the same time, community members and organizations should also take initiatives to work on these issues themselves. These initiatives should include educating the government on the need for action and assisting with the formation of an action plan with measurable objectives.

The government must move towards developing a service delivery system from a cultural perspective. It is the responsibility of the government and of every individual in a position of power to effect change and actively seek to discover the multicultural world view. The Nova Scotia provincial government should ensure that all policies, programs, and services provided are culturally inclusive, sensitive, and appropriate and to meet the needs of all Nova Scotians.

Education can perhaps best prepare more culturally competent individuals and communities by providing theory and practicum experiences in various cultures throughout the curricula, as well as providing opportunities for foreign language, anthropology, history, and ethnic courses in the study curriculum. Experiences in which students have opportunities for cultural immersion, albeit briefly, may improve cultural competence.[49]

There is a need for a lifelong commitment to a journey of increasing cultural understanding, a need to actively seek cultural experiences that expand one's own cultural world view. It is hoped that this report and the recommendations will serve to aid African Canadian Immigrants in their efforts to make Nova Scotia a more culturally accepting society.

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[49] Donelle M.; Craig, Kathleen K.; Chambers, Kathryn B. A Review of the Concept of Culture in Holistic Nursing Literature. Journal of Holistic Nursing. Vol. 18 Issue 3. Sept 2000.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Cover Letter

African Canadian Immigrant Research Project
65-b Main Avenue, Halifax, NS B3M 1A4

Invitation To Participate

The enclosed questionnaire is part of a research on the cultural and educational needs of African Canadian immigrants[1] in Nova Scotia commissioned by African Canadian Services, Department of Education, Government of Nova Scotia.[2]

The research will address issues that are important to African Canadian immigrants and will identify and document education and training needs, as well as study the needs and challenges facing African Canadian immigrants in retaining and promoting their culture identity. The research will also identify—and make recommendations for the removal of—barriers that may hinder their full participation in Canadian society.

Your participation and contribution is important and can make a difference for the research to accurately portray the needs and requirements of African Canadian immigrants.

The questionnaire is in four parts A–D.

Most of the questions are multiple choice format and allow you to express your views. *Please complete both parts of the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope before April 30th.*

The findings and recommendations of this research project will be presented to the general public in June 2001. It will also be communicated to Provincial Governmental Departments, service delivery agencies, and other institutions to better understand the African Canadian viewpoint during planning decision making and program design. If you are interested in receiving an invitation to the public presentation or would like additional information, please include your name, address and telephone number with the return questionnaire.

This is an opportunity to share your ideas, concerns, and experiences as an immigrant. Even more important, it is an opportunity to propose solutions that will better serve the needs of all African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia and enable all African Canadian Immigrants to be successful in all their endeavors.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

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[1] For the purposes of this research African Canadian Immigrants are defined as permanent residents and Canadian citizens arriving in Canada after 1960 and whose origins are hailing from the African continent, Central and South America, the Caribbean or the United States.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

In this questionnaire "Culture" refers to the native home culture that you or your family originate from. It includes everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society.

Section A: Retaining Culture *(Please mark only ONE CHOICE per line)*

1) From the following list please rank the various aspects of your culture that you would like to retain based on their level of importance.

Least Important ➡ Most Important

	❶	❷	❸	❹	❺
Traditional Customs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Language	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Religion?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ethnic Food	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional Dress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Music	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional Health Practices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child Rearing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family Relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ancestral History	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fine Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dating and Marriage Practices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other ____________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2) What aspects of your culture do you feel/perceive are most at risk of being lost?

Least at Risk ➡ Most at Risk

	❶	❷	❸	❹	❺
Traditional Customs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Language	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Religion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ethnic Food	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional Dress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Music	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional Health Practices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child Rearing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family Relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ancestral History	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Fine Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dating and Marriage Practices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other ___________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3) Since arriving in Canada what conditions acted as barriers in finding a level of comfort?

Not a Barrier ➡ Major Barrier

	❶	❷	❸	❹	❺
Isolation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of Cultural Organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Institutional Assistance Available	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Service and Product Availability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Skin Colour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Language Ability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ethnic Food	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Types of Recreation and	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leisure Activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Policing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Legal System	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4) In your daily living, what aspects of your culture conflict with the Canadian way of doing things?

Least Conflict ➡ Most Conflict

	❶	❷	❸	❹	❺
Conversational Patterns	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Religious Practices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attitude Towards Time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preference for Competition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
or Cooperation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other ___________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section B: Parent–Child Relationship

1) Which of the following aspects of your culture create a conflict in the parent-child relationship?

Least Conflict ➡ Most Conflict

	❶	❷	❸	❹	❺
Eating Habits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dress Code	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social Activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Disciplining	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Religion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional Customs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other ____________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2) As a parent (or future parent) what aspects of the traditional cultural parent-child relationship would you like to see maintained?

Not Important ➡ Very Important

	❶	❷	❸	❹	❺
Notions of Modesty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rules of Behavior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Respect for Elders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Preference for	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Competition or Cooperation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other ____________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3) Please tell us your thoughts on Parent–Child relations:

____

____

____

Section C: Cultural Orientations

Which one of the following statements do you agree with most. (Please indicate one response only)

1) In our home culture:

☐ We have little control over the environment surrounding us.
☐ We co-exist with nature in a harmonious manner and adapt to it.
☐ It is acceptable to change aspects of the environment through technology when necessary or desirable.

2) In our home culture:
- ☐ Our past/traditional customs are of central importance.
- ☐ The present is more important than the future or the past.
- ☐ The future is more important than the present and the past.

3) When negotiating a business contract back home:
- ☐ Trust exists and a verbal contract is deemed sufficient.
- ☐ One is careful to guard against being cheated.
- ☐ There is trust but it is important to be cautious to protect oneself.

4) In our home culture:
- ☐ Emphasis is on action, achievement and working.
- ☐ Emphasis is on spontaneous expression of emotions, desires and impulses and, we work to live rather than live to work.
- ☐ We balance action and emotion to achieve a mind/body balance.

5) In our home culture:
- ☐ Individual goals are more important than group goals.
- ☐ Decisions are made based on consensus and individual goals are subordinate to group goals.
- ☐ We value group relationships, but lines of authority are clear and dominate subordinate relationships.

What steps would you like the government take to better serve the needs of African immigrants in Nova Scotia? *(e.g. Cultural Awareness, Affirmative Action Policies)*

____

____

____

Section D: Personal Information

Age Group

☐ Under 18 ☐ 8-24 ☐ 25-34
☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64
☐ 65 and above

Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

Marital Status

☐ Never married
☐ Widowed
☐ Married
☐ Separated
☐ Common-law
☐ Divorced

Country of origin ______________________________

Period of arrival in Canada

☐ Before 1960
☐ 1981-1990
☐ 1961-1970
☐ 1991-2000
☐ 1971-1980

How long have you lived in Nova Scotia

☐ 1-3 years
☐ 7-9 years
☐ 4-6 years
☐ more than 10 years

Immigration status upon entry into Canada

☐ Independent Immigrant
☐ Refugee
☐ Student Visa
☐ Entrepreneur
☐ Visitor
☐ Family Sponsor
☐ Employment Visa

Present level of education

☐ Primary
☐ University
☐ Secondary
☐ No formal education
☐ College and Technical

Employment status

☐ Student
☐ Unemployed
☐ Employed

Present level of English

	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Fluent	☐	☐	☐
Good	☐	☐	☐
Basic	☐	☐	☐

In what other languages can you communicate comfortably?

____

Appendix 3: Towards Cultural Competence

A framework for cross cultural learning[1]

It is not enough to value cultural knowledge and diversity in cultural backgrounds. To fully embrace culture in everyday life, a person in a position of responsibility must first achieve cultural competence.

There is a need to develop cultural competence in understanding people from differing cultural orientations by

- committing to improve one's knowledge of multiple cultures
- exploring one's own cultural background
- seeking exposure to cultures other than one's own
- regularly discussing culture and ethnicity in theory, research, and practice.

The following table outlines the progression of becoming culturally competent.

Steps	Levels	Description
From	Unconscious incompetence	Not being aware that one is lacking knowledge about another culture.
Step 1	Conscious incompetence	Being aware that one is lacking knowledge about another culture.
Step 2	Conscious competence	Learning about the other culture, verifying generalizations about it, and adapting behaviour to accommodate the learning.
Step 3	Unconscious competence	Automatically interacting in a culturally congruent manner with people of a diverse culture.

Unconscious incompetence might occur when one has been in a familiar setting for a long time with little cultural variation or when one has not experienced a felt need for growth through a consciousness raising experience.

Conscious incompetence might come when first learning more about another culture or after an experience with an individual from another culture that caused a person to realize a lack of cultural knowledge.

Conscious competence could be considered the action stage of caring for people within one's cultural context, and may be the highest stage many will achieve.

Unconscious competence is the stage reached by some people who have lived in another culture, and/or have worked extensively with diverse cultures, may relate to other cultures at an almost intuitive level, as would be true for someone practicing.

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1 Adapted from Barnes, Craig, Chambers 2000.

Mere knowledge is not enough, but the ability to adequately incorporate cultural knowledge into daily interaction with people is what will make the difference.

One of the important steps on the road to cultural competence is to seek a heightened sense of awareness about one's own cultural heritage and belief system. Many people, particularly those still living and working in rather homogenous areas, may not be able to clearly identify characteristics of their own culture.

A study of one's own person, family, community, and larger society, in relation to their contributing effects on one's personal cultural perspective, can be an enlightening experience. For example, a person should reflect on her or his own patterns of communication, spirituality, and other behaviours, among others, to identify her or his cultural framework.

Questions that might be asked by an individual to aid in the cultural change process.

- Which culturally diverse groups do I encounter most frequently?
- With which am I the most and least knowledgeable? Why?
- With which am I the most and least comfortable? Why?
- How can I best learn about the beliefs, values and lifestyles of other cultural groups?
- Is my work environment friendly to people from other cultures?
- Are my colleagues allowed to make disparaging remarks about those who are different?
- What are my own cultural biases and values about culturally diverse groups?

Other strategies for developing cultural competency include attending formal and informal educational courses and cultural workshops, mentoring, journaling, and reading books and journals with cultural models and specific cultural content.

Report 4:
Service Delivery for African Immigrants

Submitted by
Winnie Mabaleka and Michelle Thomason, Consultants

Section 6

Executive Summary

This study explores a wide range of issues on key service delivery areas affecting African immigrants. Specific focus was placed on immigration policy, demographics, integration and discrimination, housing, childcare, social assistance, immigration settlement agencies, credit and banking, legal services, language training and health.

We conducted interviews, organized focus groups and administered questionnaires throughout the province in order to capture the experiences of the African immigrants.

The main findings presented in this report include: underutilization of settlement services due to lack of knowledge of their existence. Concern was also expressed about language barriers inhibiting access to services. Throughout this report we have found an inordinately large number of cases of racism and discrimination that impact on the utilization of social services.

While there is no easy solution to these issues and problems, there is an urgent need to provide education and cultural sensitivity to the public at large. There is also urgency to represent African immigrants in policy making and program development for immigrants.

In conclusion, we believe this study is a positive step towards developing changes needed to improve the quality of services available to African immigrants in Nova Scotia.

Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

The African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project (ACIARP) is sponsored by the African Canadian Services Division of the Department of Education. This project was commissioned to address important issues affecting the delivery of and access to various social services by African immigrants in Nova Scotia.

Areas of focus include immigration policy, demographics, integration and discrimination, housing, childcare, social assistance, immigration settlement agencies, credit and banking, legal services, language training and health.

The objectives of this project are as follows:

- To review literature and services provided by service delivery agencies with specific reference to health, housing, community services, immigrant settlement agencies, credit and banking and legal services
- To use primary and secondary data to assess service delivery in Nova Scotia
- To compare and contrast the issues related to settlement adjustment and integration of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia focussing on the procedures and practices of service delivery
- To provide an in-depth comparative research and analysis of access to service for the African Canadian immigrant and other immigrants in Nova Scotia
- To establish a current database of African Canadian immigrants
- To develop strategies for implementing changes in service delivery to African Canadian immigrants

The combination of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, visits to service delivery agencies and secondary literature offer new insights that will help unearth issues and challenges at hand and consequently lead towards developing viable options to make positive changes for a community in need. By using direct experiences from African immigrants in Nova Scotia, we are able to represent the often forgotten and ignored experiences of immigrants. Hence it is the voices, experiences and reflections of these immigrants that are the core of this work.

This research also gives a brief overview of selected service agencies in Nova Scotia and how they normally reach out to the African immigrant population. (See Appendix A for a list of agencies visited.) The immigrants who participated in the project commented on its necessity and importance. For some people, it was the first time that anyone had ever asked them to voice their immigrant experiences. This is an important step in what can only be considered a long and difficult journey of African and Caribbean immigrants who are making a new life in Canada.

Methodology

Library and Internet searches were conducted to examine the literature on the evolution of immigration policy and how it has impacted on the migration of the African immigrants. The literature also provided a general understanding of the developments surrounding the access to social services by African immigrants in Canada and Nova Scotia. Very little research has been done on African immigrants in Nova Scotia, making it difficult to make any direct reference to written evidence in the literature.

We also contacted social service agencies in Nova Scotia and conducted interviews to gather information on the nature of services that they provided. A questionnaire was developed (see Appendix B) and used to gather the experiences of participants. It was organized with both closed-ended and open-ended questions in a format that made it easy to understand. The questionnaires were distributed at focus group meetings and interviews as well as by mail. We also conducted focus groups and kitchen table talks in the Halifax/Dartmouth Metro area in Yarmouth. Personal interviews were conducted in Kentville, Antigonish and Cape Breton. In total, we held discussions with forty-five immigrants. This allowed for effective dialogue between the researchers and the immigrants.

In order to encourage participation in the research project, we sent letters of invitation to all the African associations asking for their members to participate (see Appendix C and D). We also made telephone calls, attended association meetings and other social gatherings where immigrants converged.

As per the terms of reference provided by the Project Officer, we did not use any standard population sampling methods. The choice of the immigrants who participated was purely arbitrary; anyone who could be contacted was invited to participate.

Study Limitations

The difficulty in gaining access to the African immigrant community in Nova Scotia has limited the capacity to gather more information. Some individuals in the community had their own suspicions about the research as they felt it could be exploiting the community. A growing database has been compiled in collaboration with the employment research consultant for the African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project.

Attendance at focus group discussions was low. One of the reasons was due to the fact that our target groups had recently participated in focus groups for the employment section of the African Canadian Immigrant Action Project. Most immigrants said there were time constraints due to this fact. Similarly, questionnaire response was low because for the same reason.

Reviewing the Literature on Issues Affecting African Canadian Immigrants

An Immigration Policy Overview and Impact on African Immigrants Demographics

This literature review focuses on a number of key areas: government immigration policy, integration and immigrant experiences in accessing social services in Canada. There is a noticeable lack of literature on Nova Scotian immigrants and certainly limited information available on African immigrants.

As far back as 1896 when the Liberal government of Wilfred Laurier was in power, Canadian politicians and bureaucrats viewed the black immigrants as "unwanted" to their nation's building plans (Sheldon, 1998). During that time the black immigrant was perceived as posing social concerns to the larger white community and besides, there was a myth that black people could not cope with the harsh Canadian climate (Sheldon, 1998). Thus the European immigrant was the preferred ideal settler.

There was no change in the 1953 Immigration Act as far as racism was concerned. It continuously allowed selection of immigrants on the basis of national origin which, in practice, allowed the exclusion of visible minorities (Yelaja & O'Neil, 1988). A shift in policy occurred in 1962 and 1967 when the "point system" which was instituted gave priority to meeting labour needs and family reunification, and eliminated "country of origin" as criterion (Boyd, 1987). According to Sheldon (1998), this drastic change in policy was a result of local lobbying and pressure from abroad. He contends that in Canada there had been years of lobbying and pleas by the few black immigrants, with support from labor organizations and other racially marginalized ethnic groups. Whereas internationally, Britain already felt inundated with immigrants from the Caribbean regions and some of its colonies and put pressure on the rest of the Western world to share the immigration burden.

The 1962 shift in immigration policy brought about a sudden growth in numbers of African Canadian immigrants throughout Canada. "The 1996 census revealed that, for the first time, less than half of Canada's immigrant population – which includes anyone born outside the country – is of European birth (The Globe & Mail, May 24, 1999, p. B3). Add to that are projections that by the year 2006, 43 per cent of Canadians will have at least one origin other than British, French or Aboriginal (Fry, 1997, p. xvi).

According to rough estimates by Sheldon (1998), there were less than 20,000 Black Canadians in 1951. A 1998 study by the School of Social Work at McGill University published that "50,910 Black persons immigrated to Canada between the years 1961 and 1970. Between 1971 and 1980, 111,475 arrived in Canada. An identical number arrived between 1981 and 1990." This represents growth rates of roughly 7.75 per cent between 1951 and 1970 and 11.9 per cent between 1971 and 1980.

The Demographic Changes of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia

The total population of African Canadian immigrants living in Nova Scotia remains controversial. Citizenship and Immigration Canada presents statistics on African immigration to Nova Scotia classified by Last Country of Permanent Residence from 1980 to 1995 (see Appendix E). The graphs below summarize these statistics and we can see a marked increase in the growth of the non-white immigrant population (Africa, Asia and South America) for the period 1985 and 1995. Based on these demographics, in 1980 the total immigrant population to Nova Scotia was 1,505. Of this total, immigrants from Europe constituted 15% (or 226) whereas African immigrants made up 4% (or 65) of the total. Asia, North and Central America, and South America were 56%, 24%, and 1% respectively. In 1995 a total of 3,585 immigrants came to Nova Scotia, and the proportion of European immigrants was 14% whereas that of African immigrants soared to 11%. These statistics depict a rather constant pattern of European migration to Nova Scotia during the period reviewed and a clearly significant increase of immigrants from Asia, Africa and South America.

The question for this research is to what extent have these changes in immigration structure been instituted through the service delivery process to harmonize the integration of visible minority immigrants, and particularly how has the African immigrant fared in this process. The next section gives an overview of research studies that have looked into social services delivery as for non-white immigrants. This is to provide an understanding of the structure of service provision and programs and issues of equity and efficiency in delivery.

Figure 1
Immigrants to Nova Scotia, 1980

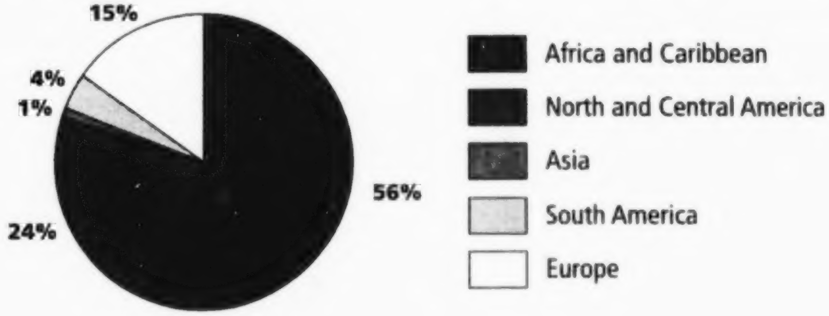
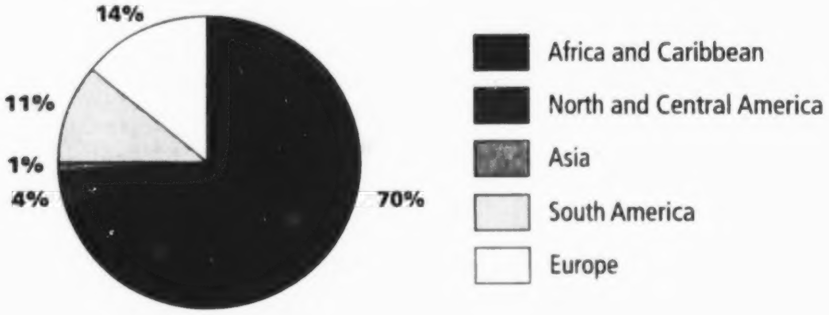


Figure 2
Immigrants to Nova Scotia, 1995



The Literature Review on Social Services Delivery and Access for Non-White Immigrants

An important aspect of dealing with an increasingly diverse immigrant population is the ability of the government to deliver social services appropriately and effectively to smooth the integration process. The process of resettlement in a new country can be a traumatic experience for an immigrant regardless of their educational or economic background. Research on social access for minorities has found barriers exist due to cultural differences and lack of language skills for some. (Sinclair-Jones, 1995).

Health Care

In terms of accessing other healthcare services, studies have shown that immigrants, especially recent immigrants, are less likely than the Canadian-born population to have chronic conditions or disabilities[1]. This means they are less likely to demand healthcare services than the Canadian born is.

Several studies site concerns over the unavailability of mental health services by immigrants. One study, citing the high incident of immigration related stress, found that "the often traumatic circumstances involved in choosing a new life in Canada; differences in language and culture; the difficulty of coping with limited economic resources; and initially at least limited employment opportunities all contribute to stress" (Cultures Canada 1986). The Canadian Task Force on Mental Health (1988a) has also undertaken significant research on mental health issues. One of their findings emphasizes that immigration itself does not increase the risk of mental stress. Certain factors that emerge after immigration lead to mental health problems for recent and longer-term immigrants. Another finding points to the roleplayed by relative socio-economic status in determining levels of emotional well-being. In this case immigrant economic status is closely linked to host country settlement policies and programs for services such as language and job training, recognition of foreign education and professional skills, and above all, to host country tolerance and attitudes towards immigrants. A workshop for African community groups in Toronto also reported similar health problems for African immigrants and refugees in that city and in particular, identified more challenges in adaptation of refugees (Opoku-Dapaah 1993).

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[1] Canada's Immigration Act stipulates that all immigrants must undergo medical screening before they are admitted to the country.

Therefore it is crucial for the host country to recognize the need to minimize the risk of such problems as "immigration related stress" and to provide appropriate services to deal with these health issues when they arise.

Social Assistance/Welfare for Immigrants

The important concern of the Immigration Department in interpretation of the law concerning immigrant landing is whether or not the person in question has the capacity to get off the welfare roll (Land, 1993). Contrary to the popular stereotypes that immigrants place a heavy burden on the social welfare system, many studies have shown that immigrants are not a drain on the social welfare system and the economy at large (Canada Metropolis, 1998). Many immigrants prefer to work to get the same level of earnings as social assistance. The whole notion of welfare or handouts is not embraced by most visible minority cultures. A study by Albari (1991) on the utilization of social assistance by immigrants in Canada found that immigrants use fewer welfare services on average than do native-born Canadians. To validate this finding, in 1993, a different study observed that immigrants are less dependent on welfare and other social assistance than non-immigrants of a similar age. Based on the 1981 and 1986 Census the Alberta Department of Economic Development and Tourism showed that immigrants received proportionately fewer unemployment benefits and other government transfer payments.

For immigrants whose circumstances have pushed them to use the social welfare system their experiences have revealed some form of dissatisfaction with the delivery methods and attitudes. There is a generalization by service delivery agencies that immigrants are out to defraud the system. The 1995 study of Toronto immigrants has shown that systemic discrimination is inherent in the delivery of social assistance to visible minorities, and yet immigrant communities show little evidence of long-term dependency on welfare. Signs of discrimination have shown through "systemic denial of access to information to ethnocultural groups; and elimination of programs designed to assist those eligible for benefits" (Sinclair-Jones, 1995).

Housing and Language Barriers

Other issues of concern identified by participants of the African workshop in Toronto include housing and language acquisition difficulties. Participants felt that:

- Subsidized housing units... had been taken by long-established immigrants who had more information about housing than the newly arrived... and the system of housing had not been designed with the structure of African families in mind... Information about housing services or lack thereof and government efforts at housing delivery were inadequate. (Opoku-Dapaah 1993, p.6)

The language barriers of immigrants have also been researched extensively. Immigrants from non-English speaking countries who, as stated earlier, constitute a larger proportion of recent immigrants, face integration problems which are compounded by their language deficiencies. Access to language training programs has received some criticism in Canada. According to Giles (1987), immigrant women have been systematically denied access to literacy training due to gaps found in the federal and provincial approaches to language training. Similar gaps in provision of training were echoed in the workshop organized for the African community in Toronto. Participants discussed the absence of language programs for seniors. Timing of English language training programs was also a concern for them, making the programs inaccessible to a large part of the community. Also, complaints were raised about the fact that the language program focussed on teaching Canadian accent rather that the standard reading and writing skills.

In 1989, Statistics Canada in collaboration with the National Literacy Secretariat of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada conducted a measurement survey for four reading skill levels based on language acquisition training provided to immigrants. Results as presented in an article by Boyd (1992) indicated that 'immigrants with level three reading skills could use printed material provided that the text was simple and clearly laid out. Those with level four skills could meet most everyday reading requirements." According to the survey immigrants experience limitations associated with weak language skills in both general and job-related restrictions, hence underemployment. The survey also indicated that seventy-three per cent of respondents preferred language programs that would teach them job-related reading and writing skills compared to sixty-three per cent that preferred training for basic everyday reading and writing skills. There is a real need for literacy training that considers user characteristics and preferences.

The Social Services Delivery System

On the delivery aspect of programs and services for African immigrants, lack of African representation in service delivery is perceived to be a root cause of delivery ineffectiveness.

"Recent changes in immigration to Canada have contributed to a growing awareness among social work practitioners and policy analysts of the need to provide ethnically sensitive services" (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 1991, p. 255). Yet just to assume hiring Africans will be the only solution to problems of racism and access to services is to ignore the complexity of the African experience. Matsuoka and Sorenson, in their study of 'Ethnic Identity and Social Service Delivery," make a number of useful observations and comments:

- The ethnic group, rather than being a homogeneous entity, may be internally divided by gender, class, political orientation, and in, the case of immigrants and refugees, by length of residence in North America; it need not share a commonality of interests. (p. 256)
- Social workers who seek to provide services within the multicultural context need to develop knowledge and sensibilities for practice with populations that may be classified as coherent groups but that actually may be highly factionalized. (p. 256)
- Even within the same categories of ethnic identification, there are profound divisions along class lines. It would be naïve to assume that ethnicity cuts across these lines and that there are either problems or goals shared by the entire population. The functionally illiterate refugee or immigrant will require a different type of assistance from the displaced professional with advanced training and proficient language skills. (p. 263)

There are four models of service delivery that we have identified in various studies. Each is discussed briefly. They are: services by mainstream organizations; parallel services provided by ethnic organizations for their own communities; multicultural service approach; and finally the bridging approach.

In the first model the biggest problems of the mainstream agencies which deliver generic services is that these agencies may lack the historical and cultural sensitivity needed as well as appropriate language skills to meet the specific needs of immigrants. Concerning the second model of individual organizations providing services within their own communities is the fact of under-funding and the typical lack of professional staff. The third model, the multicultural service approach, is based on a number of problematic assumptions. One assumption is that Africans or Pacific Asians or Indians (the list can go on) are a cohesive group able and willing to meet the needs of all members. Matsuoka and Sorenson write, "...[T]his ignores significant political and religious differences that may exist among those grouped together. Informants contacted in this study protested the use of a general category; as one person stated: 'Is Africa a country or a continent?' Do they think we are all the same?" (p. 260). The Immigrant Access Service in Winnipeg created the fourth model. This approach is most useful in the connections forged between mainstream agencies and the various cultural communities. Cross-cultural sensitizing could be the most important piece in creating excellent service delivery to the immigrant population.

Issues of Integration and Discrimination Facing African Immigrants in Nova Scotia

The shifts in the ethnic structure of the Canadian population point to the importance of the concept of multiculturalism. These changes also raise important issues of how well these diverse and very visible immigrants are adapting to Canada: and on the other hand how tolerant mainstream society is towards new immigrants.

Integration

Integration is a concept that has diverse meaning. The immigrants we interviewed had different feelings about the process of integration. There were immigrants who believed integration was possible but that the general population must put in a greater effort. Others felt integration was impossible and/or unwanted. The third group held a belief in between the two extremes determined to accept what came their way as part of being in "someone else's country."

"We, when I say we I'm talking about the Africans, we make a, we go through a tremendous transformation. We want to adjust [and] maintain our own identity but yet I don't think the dominant group are even, they don't even try to understand. They don't want to. We put so much effort to integrate into Canadian society, to learn the culture and what it's laws [are] but they don't want to put that little bit of effort."[2]

"I'm not a big fan of this whole idea of integration… You go to Toronto there's little Italy, Jewish people, East Indians, Lebanese… They're able to live together in their area, set up their businesses they're able to integrate enough in the community to do what they have to do but still maintain themselves as different and united enough to put themselves first."

In 1974 and 1991, Angus Reid conducted large-scale polls to determine Canadians' support of multiculturalism and integrative actions. After reviewing the data, this comment was made by co-designer John Berry: "We may conclude that Canadian attitudes are clearly not assimilationist, rather they support some degree of cultural maintenance along with some degree of sharing and accommodation on the part of the ethnic groups…" (Tepper, 1997, p. 62). It is not clear what exactly is meant by "some degree of … accommodation on the part of the ethnic groups." This multicultural policy of sharing is valuable, as one women stated.

"In Canada everyone has their own culture. The good thing about the government is they let you keep your religion and your culture."

For others, integration was much more complicated and even impossible.

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[2] Please note throughout the report, quotations in italics are from focus group discussions and interviews with immigrants.

"Immigrants come to Canada and after two generations they become totally integrated into the Canadian mainstream. I'm talking about immigrants from Europe. That option to integrate is not open to us. Our cousins who came here 200 years ago are still not integrated. We have to be mindful of how much premium we place on integration… In other words when we finish mimicking the accents of Nova Scotians, our colour is the next one. What are we going to do about that? When we finish with that then there is plastic surgery for our features. I think we have to think long and hard on how we are going to conduct ourselves…"

The results from the Angus Reid polls presented in the Current Issues Review on Canadian Multiculturalism (1997) show:

- 78% of respondents believed that multiculturalism policy would enrich Canadian culture and that roughly two-thirds of respondents thought that a society with more ethnic groups would be able to tackle new problems as they arose. The survey also showed that 89% of respondents supported programs to eliminate racial discrimination through public education and 85% supported the idea of helping recent Canadian citizens acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for integration into Canada, regardless of ethnic or racial backgrounds. (p. 10)

The above listed figures may not capture the "uneasiness" felt by Canadians towards multicultural policy. The Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future established in 1991 reports:

- Overwhelmingly participants told us that reminding us of our different origins is less useful in building a unified country than emphasizing the things we have in common. …While Canadians accept and value Canada's cultural diversity, they do not value many of the activities of the multicultural programs of the federal government. These are seen as expensive and divisive in that they remind Canadians of their different origins rather than their shared symbols, society, and future. (Leman, 1997, p. 11)

These often-conflicting sentiments of the general population are seen, felt and lived daily by African immigrants in Nova Scotia.

False Expectations

One theme that developed through the focus groups and interviews was "False Expectations of Life in Canada." Numerous informants were surprised at the realities of life in Canada, which were a stark contrast from the image projected in their home countries.

"When we moved here, this in not what we expected. Everything at home that you hear and see about Canada is glamorous and there is nobody to tell you that it is going to be like this. It's only when you come here, when you have landed that you realize you have landed in the fire."

An obvious solution to prevent this kind of shock is to better prepare immigrants in their home countries.

"When you leave your country voluntarily to this country, you've got to be prepared that there are going to be some problems. My concern in terms of services is how much advice is given to people before they leave home country about the situation they will be faced with. Does someone meet with them in the country? Or if they were refugees, meeting them somewhere in the camps so it wouldn't be a shock?"

Bridglal Pachai (1988) writes, "To lighten the burden of relocation and to lessen the pain of readjustment, immigration officers at home and abroad should be particularly sensitive to the plight of immigrants" (p.163). It is highly recommended that more information be provided to prospective immigrants. That information needs to offer more than the glossy tourism brochures. It would be encouraged to seek out the experiences of immigrants and have these immigrants, successful and struggling ones, present their experiences. This information would offer a balance to the shock so many immigrants face upon arrival.

Discrimination

The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* Section 15 (1) states:

- Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.

There is a great divide between what is stated in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the day-to-day subtle and racist experiences that African immigrants suffer. The following quotations provide an overview of a number of different immigrants' reactions to the racism and discrimination they face in Canada. It becomes apparent through the comments made that African immigrants in Nova Scotia face discrimination and racism, however their reactions differ.

" 'Twice as much for half as much' if you're a Negro person you have to be twice as qualified to get half of whatever is the going rate."

"I used to work [in a local grocery chain] …they used to follow all the Black people in the store… and all the white people used to be stealing! The lady with the fur coat used to be stealing the caviar and I used to pretend I didn't see them. You know what I used to say? Good for you, you're watching the Black people and it's your own colour stealing."

"What happened in Kosovo happened in Rwanda. How many Rwandans were lifted into this province? Nobody. How many Kosovors? It's because they're white."

While there is no obvious or easy solution to these issues, education must continue to provide the tools for fighting the injustices suffered by African immigrants. "Education has a key role to play in overcoming prejudices. 'Objective' information about other cultures leads to better understanding and breaks down ignorance and racism." (Chan, 1997, p. xii). It is our hope that this study plays an important part in this ongoing education.

A Comparative Analysis of Nova Scotian Immigrants

In this section, the comparison of other immigrant groups is used to provide a larger understanding of the immigrant integration experience. Reports and studies of other non-African immigrant groups here in Nova Scotia have been used as the sources of data.

Latin American Immigrants in Nova Scotia

"The root cause of Latin American emigration is either political or political and economic. Seldom is it purely economic" (Hartzman, 1991, p. 1). Immigrants from Spanish-speaking Latin American[1] countries became a larger presence in Canada around 1969.[3]

- ...1969 [is] the year in which immigration from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries doubled from 2,500 to 4,800... By the late 1970's immigration from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries reached 9,500 and represented between 5 per cent and 6 per cent of all arriving immigrants (Hartzman, 1991, p. 7).

There were approximately 225 Spanish-speaking Latin Americans residing in Nova Scotia in 1981; however, by 1986 this number had declined to approximately 170 immigrants (Hartzman, 1991).

Isolation was a major factor of these immigrants' experiences. As there was not a large community to cushion their Canadian culture shock, life was difficult for them. The decision was made to create an association of Spanish speakers. There was a great deal of doubt from respondents of Hartzman's survey about the viability of such an organization.

A composite of the reasons given from the survey reads as follows: "We aren't going to organize anything. Our Latin American nature doesn't contribute a lot to organizations. We Latins are not committed to carrying things through. We talk about doing things, we begin things, but we don't do them. We react too passionately and once we start talking politics, there is not friendship."

Language training was the major service needed by these immigrants. One interviewee "cited her excellent command of English as the determining factor in her successful adjustment" (Hartzman, 1991, p. 14). Latin American immigrants who used the Employment and Immigration Canada training courses had similar complaints to the African immigrants interviewed for this study. The training courses while useful did not provide sufficient skills for employability. Without employment, there are limited opportunities for integration and satisfaction.

In her 1991 study on Latin American immigrants in Nova Scotia, Carole Hartzman focuses on the integration process.

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[3] For this study, Latin American Spanish-speaking immigrants include: North-American Mexico, Antillean Cuba, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Central-American Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, South American Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina.]

- As one might expect, respondents who have lived in Canada and Nova Scotia the longest responded most positively about their success in integration into the Nova Scotian way of life and felt less isolated…criteria for successful integration, other than duration of residence, were: their level of competency in English, their success in finding employment, and their attitudes toward Canada and Nova Scotia (p. 11).

Dutch Immigrants in Nova Scotia

One group of immigrants who had few issues of integration was the Dutch immigrants. These immigrants were coming to "fill up empty spaces with people who can work the land" (Economic Council of Canada 1991, p. ix). Since the end of the nineteenth century the Dutch had been amongst the preferred immigrants admitted to Canada because they were both 'Nordic and skilled agriculturists' (Gerrits, 1996, p. 15). Being Nordic, they were expected to integrate well and quickly into the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture of this country and as agriculturists their expertise was in demand in Canada.

The Dutch immigrant experience is just another example of the racist immigration policy in place here in Canada. In fact the Dutch immigrants were provided with the proverbial red carpet treatment. One wonders how the agricultural expertise they possessed differed from that possessed by the African immigrants coming to Nova Scotia from the southern plantations in the United States. Obviously they were not accorded the opportunities to work with other Canadian farmers to be as productive as the Dutch immigrants.

"In March of 1947, the Dutch and Canadian governments adopted an informal arrangement, known as 'The Netherlands Farm-Families Movement' or the 'Netherlands-Canada Settlement Scheme' whereby the two governments encouraged and coordinated the migration of Dutch Farmers to Canada. This was not a legally binding agreement as it 'would have been unwise both economically and politically.' Thus the 'scheme' always remained a gentleman's agreement (Gerrits, 1996, p. 16).

Between 1947 and 1970 some 185,000 Dutch nationals came to Canada. By 1961, between 3,000 and 3,300 Dutch immigrants had chosen to settle in Nova Scotia (Gerrits, 1996, p. 11). The newly arrived were placed on a farm to learn about Canadian farming styles and after a few years these immigrants could request loans to begin their own farming operations.

In the Dutch experience there is no discussion of access to social services or English language training. Almost half of the 250 immigrants interviewed by Gerrits stated they or their parents had little or no English. Others had taken immigrant English classes in Holland. Complaints were made about the housing arrangements available but these problems seemed to have been taken care of on an individual basis. Apparently the ease of integration in general diffused the necessity of specific social services. "Of the 250 first-generation immigrants surveyed 212 indicated that they or their families, had been quickly accepted by their neighbors and had been made to feel welcome by them" (Gerrits, 1996, p. 111).

Again, the experience of African immigrants has been the opposite as many of them speak of feelings of isolation and rejection in their new Canadian surroundings. It is essential to understand how this welcoming by neighbours offered more possibilities of integration for the Dutch than any government-sponsored programs. There is no mention of official English language training in Canada upon arrival, other than through working and living with Canadian farming families.

Asian Immigrants

In a study of Asian immigrants in British Columbia, a number of racist attitudes were apparent.

- Racism against Asians is increasingly based on allegations of unacceptable cultural differences. These include: wearing turbans in places where 'hats' are traditionally forbidden, carrying ceremonial daggers in violation of rules against 'weapons', building 'monster' houses, and engaging in exclusionary business practices. Asian-origin immigrants are also blamed for destroying the 'life-style' of European-origin Canadians by changing the ethnic composition of schools and by contributing to rising real estates prices that make housing unaffordable to children in the neighborhood where they grew up. (Simmons, 1997, p. 46)

In terms of accessing social services, language training was the greatest service utilized, though "... it has been claimed that some Chinese immigrants in Richmond [British Columbia] can pass the day, and indeed the year, doing whatever they have to do, without having to utter a single word of English" (Woo, 1997, p. 324). These are specifically business immigrants who chose to limit their social and business lives to Chinese contacts.

In this study we did not interviews any African business class immigrants. Undoubtedly though, during our discussions on banking and credit, the desire to create an African network was recognized to stimulate business interests amongst the African immigrant population. This network would act in two facets. One would be to provide credit to new immigrants and secondly, to support African businesses. One informant stated

"I'm not a big fan of this whole idea of integration... I would prefer to live in a society surrounded by [name of country] who interacted. We go out, do our things in the community but not giving up language, culture, accents anything. You go to Toronto, there's little Italy, Jewish people, East Indians, Lebanese... They're able to live together in their area, set up their businesses they're able to integrate enough in the community to do what they have to do but still maintain themselves as different distinct and united enough to put themselves first."

In British Columbia, the immigrant experience for Asians has added layers of complexity. For African immigrants in Nova Scotia they are still battling access to jobs, business opportunities and social services. For Asian immigrants in British Columbia it is noted that

- The contemporary situation is one in which the old battle to eliminate racism with respect to access to schools, jobs, and business opportunities is not yet complete. At the same time, a new battle is emerging to counter racism to build a house or place of worship that looks different, or to wear ethnic head-dress in places where 'hats' are forbidden, and in other respects to become accepted socially and culturally. (Simmons, 1997, p. 49)

This is an indication that the on-going war against racism is being fought by "visible minorities" across Canada.

- In sum, Canadians of Asian origin, like other non-European origin peoples in Canada, find themselves in a paradox. As they make progress in breaking down the old stereotypes, they find themselves facing a 'backlash' in the form of new 'reactive' racist hostilities and resentments. (Simmons, 1997, p. 49)

The responsibility is always placed upon the immigrant to defend their cultural practices, improve their accents, change the way they dress, eat, and talk. When analyzing experiences of other immigrant populations, with the exception of the Dutch, it becomes apparent that there are numerous injustices suffered by "visible minority immigrants" in Canada.

The African Canadian Experience of Accessing Social Services in Nova Scotia

The presence of African immigrants in Nova Scotia dates back as early as 1606 but it was only until 1796 when the United Empire Loyalists arrived from the American colonies that the African presence was significantly strengthened in Nova Scotia (Sheldon, 1995) Research shows that right from their early settlement African immigrants faced numerous problems causing painful adjustment. They suffered prejudice and discrimination and lived a life of poverty, insecurity, social distinctions and loneliness. In his study of the "The Immigrant Experience in Halifax, 1881-1931," Carrigan (1988) found that while other minority immigrants like the Jews and Asians also encountered harsh experiences economically and socially, African immigrants were relegated to the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy. As he saw it, the problems of Blacks were compounded by the fact that they were a different colour, hence they were singled out and prejudice was expressed openly.

The anti-Black sentiment that existed then in Nova Scotia and Halifax in particular placed many hardships in the lives of African immigrants. Carrigan (1988) relates how African immigrants were denied social services that were available to mainstream Canadians.

- In the city of Halifax there was a virtual community within a community called Africville. Begun in the 1850s, it was an ill-constructed collection of substandard houses, sheds, and outdoor privies. At no time was it provided with standard city services. There was another virtual all Black neighborhood in a different part of the city which was also run-down and neglected. The vicious cycle of prejudice, lack of education, lack of opportunity, and poverty characterized the Black community throughout the entire period. Black immigrants encountered a rather bleak prospect for a future in the Promised Land. (p. 37)

Over time as more and more African immigrants came to Nova Scotia the problems of prejudice had already been rooted and were beyond repair. The level of discrimination and prejudice against African immigrants in the past could be attributed to various factors. One is their lower economic status in the society, and the other is the fact that they were in relatively small numbers. Also, the stigma attached to slavery then no doubt added to the negative connotations of how Blacks were viewed in the Americas and Europe, too.

Most recent African immigrants who live in Nova Scotia represent the new wave of immigrants who came through the "points system." Like most recent immigrants, they are well-educated, highly skilled, aware of their rights and responsibilities and participate actively in their communities. Given these strong socio-economic characteristics of African immigrants this research seeks to find out what kind of settlement experiences African immigrants have been subjected to in their newly chosen country. We have seen a brief account of how the early Black settlers suffered from prejudice and discrimination in Halifax during the 1800's and early 1900's, and how they were denied social services that were available to mainstream Canadians. In the next section we discuss the experiences of recent African Canadian immigrants trying to access social services in Nova Scotia.

Access to LanguageTraining Services

The issue of language and accents as they impact on gaining access to social services received extensive coverage both in the focus groups and individual discussions. It was a controversial issue because some African immigrants felt that having migrated from English-speaking countries their English language was relatively good and in some instances superior to that of the average Canadian. So they did not perceive having an accent as a barrier at the workplace or schooling and generally in integrating in Canadian society. On the other hand some immigrants in teaching and telemarketing professions and students as well felt that depending on one's profession having an African accent was perceived negatively by the dominant society and at times affected one's opportunities at work and at school.

Some very fluent immigrants with adequate English skills commented on the negative perceptions held about African accents and how such perceptions established a barrier in communication:

"No matter how fluent you are, you are always perceived as the other… Because you are African, Chinese etc (non-White). You may have better English grammar compared to the dominant group but they always find fault in what you say and how you say it… They take ownership of the language… They are the ones who establish that barrier in communication."

"We really do face a difficult challenge in as much as we have an accent… it is very interesting because the accent, though it may be a barrier for the African, for some reason that didn't affect say Chretien who has a strong accent and is Prime Minister. Even other white people from Yugoslavia and other places have an accent, but somehow their accent is not much of a barrier..."

" It's really putting the focus, the responsibility on the immigrant. Almost like blaming the victim. The immigrant and her accent is the victim of an attitude by some in the majority culture. It is an attitude that presents a barrier that makes them not want to understand."

This barrier in accents and communication was reinforced by the experience of another immigrant, a professor, who underwent an unpleasant ordeal with her students and departmental head. After having been a professor for many years at the same institution she did not understand why a group of her students went to complain to the head of department about having trouble hearing her accent. She was shocked when the issue was brought forward by her superior because her previous evaluations had no hint of student dissatisfaction due to her accent, hence she responded angrily:

"'You are telling me that for nine years I've been talking and people haven't been understanding me? What do they hear? I said let me ask you a simple question. Do you see this skin? It's black. What you are telling me is to change my skin.' I was angry and reported to the Dean. I asked for my evaluations for the last nine years."

Another professor commented on the same issue;

"I'm very sure, if I came from Russia or Australia or for that matter from Britain, you would pay attention and listen, because I'm from Africa the assumption is that I can't speak so you can't hear."

A differing opinion was advanced by one immigrant and she felt that the responsibility of communication lies with each individual immigrant:

"For me, as an African woman or an African person, an African professional, I believe in taking responsibility for the accent. If you think the accent is a barrier in your career take responsibility for it rather than shouting. That's what I'm fed up and tired of hearing. We keep on blaming others for our problems when we don't want to take responsibility."

African immigrants pointed to the following as some root causes of the accent problem. According to their view:

- *A lack of tolerance and recognition of ethnicity.*
- *A lack of capacity by delivery agencies to address language concerns.*
- *Negative media coverage.*

"It is a racial problem...In whatever way you speak English, you are not speaking the English they want, so it becomes a barrier. Not that you don't know how to speak English...The way I would say something is not the way a Canadian would say it, but it doesn't mean we are not saying the same thing. Discrimination is prevalent too. Your race becomes the first thing they see and then whatever comes out of your mouth is secondary..."

"When it come to accents we can't change that, sometimes it is an excuse... they understood you well but to get rid of you they're going to claim they don't understand you."

"Because the first thing a Canadian will say is where is your accent from, you know instead of just listening and talking. They close their mind and just switch off."

A different point of view was presented by other immigrants who spoke of the benefits of having an accent. They felt that African immigrants generally had earned a relatively good reputation compared to native Blacks in Nova Scotia, so their accent made them distinct from the other. Hence it worked to their advantage to speak with an African accent, they didn't have to hide it. Furthermore, it was added that it didn't really matter how you spoke as long as you presented yourself humbly and professionally. It was felt that a positive approach is key to successful integration no matter how you spoke because it defined your identity and inspired confidence.

Some immigrants were pragmatic concerning the demands of English in the workforce but recognized the responsibility of communication must be shared with immigrants and the larger Canadian society. They felt that the need for mutual accommodation where the mainstream society did not just dictate and impose their criteria and values to newcomers was overdue. The importance of dialogue was stressed. The onus shouldn't be on the immigrant to change, but on the other side to listen too. More demands were placed on Canadians to recognize and work with the realities of a multicultural, multi-linguistic and pluralistic society.

Pertinent to the issue of accents and languages is the plight of those African immigrants coming to Nova Scotia with very little or no English. For this group of people language was cited to be the biggest obstacle in accessing social services. There is no doubt that knowledge of an official language is by far the most crucial link to full participation in any society. Language difficulties have been documented in the vast Canadian literature on immigration and integration. In a study of immigrant women in Ontario, Estable and Meyer (1989) found that with no English language, women had limited options for employment. These women lacked equal access to social services to which all Canadians are entitled (healthcare, social assistance, education, training and recreation) and they also experienced isolation and thus could neither integrate nor contribute with full potential.

Based on the questionnaire survey, this study found that all the 85 participants could speak, read and write English. The issue then concerns respondents' level of English and their comfort level in English. We asked if immigrants had taken any language training, and 23 or 27.1% responded with a "yes" while 62 or 72.9% said "no." Of the respondents who participated in language training, 17 out of 22 took English training, 5 took French and 1 took Spanish. We also wanted to find out if people who took language training were associated with a certain immigration class. Table 1 below shows what classification of immigrants tended to enroll in language training courses:

Table 1
Immigration Classification versus Language Training Participation

Immigration Classification	Language training participants		No participation in language training	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Refugee or humanitarian grounds	8	36.4	4	6.3
First as a student, then landed immigrant	6	27.3	22	34.9
Business immigrant			4	6.3
Independent immigrant	1	4.5	15	23.8
Private sponsorship	2	9.1	4	6.3
Family sponsorship	5	22.7	9	14.3
Other			1	1.6
No answer			3	4.8
Not applicable			1	1.6
Total	**22**	**100.0**	**63**	**100.0**

As displayed in the table, most African immigrants who enroll in language training courses have come to Canada under the refugee class (36.4%) followed by the group that come first as students, then attains landed immigrant status (27.3%). These results are not surprising considering that most African refugees have come from countries where English is not the official language (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia).

Through discussions held with immigrants, particularly women, mainly from Somalia and Ethiopia, problems associated with language deficiency were identified. Participants stated that without good English they faced limited options for employment and education and were forced to engage in low-level jobs. They also felt isolated and had limited access to institutions of higher learning. As one immigrant noted:

"The kinds of English courses that MISA offers to immigrants is just basic one, we need more advanced like TOEFL test. How many students who are African, like Somalia's who go to SMU and they don't even get the admission and they fail over and over?"

Central to this issue is the fact that most non-English speaking immigrants came to Nova Scotia involuntarily as government-sponsored refugees. They came unprepared physically and emotionally and left their families behind and faced the added burden of learning a new language for survival. They expressed that among all other experiences of integration the most difficult was trying to learn the English language in an environment of people with very different backgrounds and experiences. At the same time they are trying to cope with political and social pressures affecting their families in their home countries.

"I think that for African immigrants coming from these countries [non-English speaking] language is a powerful tool... we cant speak the language... so we need, maybe Africans to deliver these language and education services to us immigrant Africans. Rather than going to other schools, we don't progress. We need a different environment to learn... they package all the immigrants, Africans, Asians, everything... I learn much better sitting next to someone I can identify with."

To what extent is the English acquired through English as Second Language (ESL) programs helping African immigrants integrate fully?

Most African immigrants with little or no English have gone through formal ESL training programs offered by the Metropolitan Immigration Settlement Agency (MISA). The Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada sponsors numerous ESL programs throughout Nova Scotia. The programs are structured to offer language training to adults from level 1 to level 5. Officials at the Citizenship and Immigration stated that level 4 and 5 are fairly new and unique to Nova Scotia because other provinces still offer only up to level 3. Most immigrants interviewed went through level 1 to 3 and feel that they have benefited to the extent that they are able to speak enough English to function in their day-to-day lives.

During discussions about the quality of ESL training programs most immigrants felt that there was still room for improvement. Also, respondents to the questionnaire survey indicated that they were not very satisfied with the level of language training they received from various agencies.

Results of the survey are shown in the responses tabulated below:

Table 2
Language Training Ratings

Language Training Ratings	N	Minimum*	Maximum*	Mean	Std Deviation
Private tutor	2	2	3	2.50	0.71
MISA language training	6	1	4	3.00	1.10
Metro ESL	1	3	3	3.00	-
Other language training	3	1	4	3.00	1.73
University language training	10	1	5	3.90	1.20
Valid N (listwise)	0				

** Ratings for level of satisfaction as follows:*
code 1 - very dissatisfied, 2 - dissatisfied, 3 - somewhat satisfied, 4 - satisfied, 5 - very satisfied

The responses to all these questions range from 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum). The means for all the variables range from 2.50 to 5.00. The smallest ordered mean (2.50) is closest to code 3 (somewhat satisfied), and the largest mean (3.9) is closest to code 4 (satisfied). The standard deviations show a fairly constant range from 0.71 to 1.73. As can be seen from the table most training was taken from MISA and the universities. Immigrants were satisfied with the training received from the university (3.90); whereas they were "somewhat satisfied" with MISA training.

Immigrants with small children found it difficult to continue with ESL training once they shifted from the one-year government sponsorship to the provincial social assistance programs. They complained that the latter does not provide childcare for those who want to advance their language training. As a result, mothers felt that their progress was stifled and their English competency was too low to qualify them for college or university admission.

Some immigrants reported having actually failed university courses mainly due to English deficiency. For some immigrants there was an urgent need to pursue a paycheck instead of an education. They felt that engaging in gainful employment was necessary to supplement the inadequate social assistance they claimed to have received. They had to make certain inevitable personal choices that forced them to sacrifice their language training.

Immigrants also commented on certain negative aspects of the training they have received. The list includes "intensity of coursework, … not enough of the language spoke, it's mostly reading instead of oral conversations, … not enough training given."

Research has shown that typically success of language programs depends to a great extent on the learner's circumstances. The situation at their home; the support they got from friends and family; the strength of the training teacher; other aspects of school experiences as well as the value that is placed on their mother language. In a study of Spanish immigrants in the United States, Yinger (1994) found that immigrants were more likely to resist integration and assimilation if they were involuntary because they perceived it to be a form of coercion and after all they considered their stay to be temporary.

Such a finding leads us to believe that for the African immigrant group, the standard ESL approach designed to speed up the learning and to improve the use of standard English is not as effective as it should be. There is need for a detailed evaluation to assess course effectiveness and to determine specific areas for improvement. In their own assessment some immigrants said that they felt inadequately prepared by the English training they received because of the following observations:

"The English course doesn't make you ready for the job."

"Why can't there be English training within the workplace?"

The immigrants summarized suggestions to improve problems of accents as consisting of the following:

"A change in attitudes by the population at large is needed to break down barriers of language and accents.

"I went to a program and somebody from Newfoundland was talking and I didn't understand. When I started focussing I got used to the way he was talking. So, we all come from different backgrounds, we all speak English with our local accents. One just needs to give a little bit of attention and focus a bit… you have to make an effort to meet halfway."

"I went to a speech pathologist to try and find out what was wrong with the way I pronounced words and after attending several sessions through my work, my communication improved, perhaps there are different ways to look at it and how much damage the problem is causing to one's profession.

"I think we need to come together to help newcomers… we can get organized and obtain funding to employ our own people who are educated and get university students to come and volunteer…"

Is the Nova Scotia Health Care System Accessible to African Immigrants?

Understanding the Health Care System

Patients are presumably offered protection from harm through the process of informed consent and patients' rights. Most immigrants reported no difficulties understanding the healthcare system and their rights as patients. They seemed aware of their entitlements and were comfortably familiar with the process of accessing doctors and other healthcare providers. As stated earlier in the report most African immigrants migrated after the introduction of the immigration points system, an indication that most were relatively educated. Some came as students and initially had their own independent health insurance that provided information about accessing the service. For this group of people information was also available through Student Advisory Offices.

African immigrants coming to Canada as refugees receive information on the Canada's healthcare system through their immigration support officers. MISA also provides information on entitlements, MSI coverage, referrals to doctors who are familiar with immigrants' needs and availability of interpreters where necessary. The existing immigrant community also plays a crucial role in providing information needed by newcomers.

Does universality of health care guarantee effective health care delivery?

Experiences of immigrants as told in person to person discussions and focus groups generally point to some concerns with regards to the quality of healthcare service delivered to immigrants. While they appreciate that healthcare is free for everyone in Canada there are complaints about the inequities that exist within the system, particularly to visible minorities. One immigrant commented that while healthcare is a universal service, there was the possibility for unequal service.

"Let me just tell you something, like any group in society, any population, healthcare professionals also are a microcosm of that society. In general society we have people who are kind and nice and thoughtful and we have people who are mean and not caring even though they are in the profession. And we have people who are racist and we have people who are not, just because you happen to be a health professional in the hospital it doesn't remove you from how you were reared your values and what you hold about people. You are not supposed to demonstrate that in your job but who knows! You can do that subtly so long as you're not overt and blatant with it so let's be real!"

A few immigrants also felt that although the healthcare providers in the hospitals provided the service that they expected, the reception by customer service personnel was not always good, at times it was difficult to justify the long periods of waiting.

"We need to get more doctors. I spent four to five hours in emergency because there was not enough beds or not enough doctors to look at me. They gave me painkillers until I lost the baby. I was bleeding like hell. I left work at 10:00 till 4:00 How can I explain it? Because I am black… because I am a newcomer here… because there're no doctors here? What explanation could I have in that situation?"

"I had an issue when I took my daughter to the hospital she had a really, really high fever and convulsions. We were there for several hours. People came in after us, and were waited on. And finally after about four hours, I left. I went to triage nurse and she said 'Well…' and did nothing (apparently it is the triage nurse who estimates what's an emergency and what isn't) and in my estimation having convulsions is an emergency! So I left as mad as can be and I went home and called the Chief of Staff who was in charge of the hospital! I told him I was not pleased. So he told me to bring her back and they will immediately look at her. The fact is I am the kind of people who would find that upsetting, undignified, annoying and I would followup. A lot of people because of language or unsure of things would not do that, it depends on your length of time here too."

Lack of language skills obviously hampers or impedes the ability to access different services and healthcare is no exception. African immigrants with English deficiencies reported having received inadequate healthcare, perhaps due to linguistic inability to relate to health providers or even approaching them. One immigrant felt that there was communication breakdown and her health concerns were not being attended to efficiently. She did not feel that she needed an interpreter, but she just felt marginalized. This is what she had to say about her discontentedness with the health system:

"When I came to Canada I had health problems relating to my hand injury that I suffered when I was a refugee…. I made several visits to the hospital for check-ups and I believed that with their advanced technology I would recover quickly but up to this day I still feel the same pain. I believe

that at the hospital they are not listening to me…. They stopped doing tests because they say nothing is wrong with me and yet I have so much pain. I don't understand what their problem is…I have had to take long-term disability because my job is physically demanding and this means less money for my family."

This study found that 19 out of a total of 85 respondents or 22.4% reported having problems in getting good healthcare service. Out of this group of people, 31.6% came to Canada first as students then later became landed immigrants, and 21.1% came as refugees and the same proportion under family sponsorship. Moreover, immigrants who encountered problems were a relatively well-educated group with a university degree or better, about 78.9%. Therefore there is no clear association between immigrants facing problems in health and level of education or immigration status on arrival.

The nature of health problems as perceived by healthcare recipients are tabulated below:

Table 3
Problems Encountered by Healthcare Recipients

Nature of problem	Proportion of immigrants out of 19 with problems (%)
Finding a doctor	10.5
Communicating with receptionists, nurses and doctors	10.5
	10.5
Understanding the doctor and prescription given	5.3
Understanding and awareness of hospital system	10.5
Inappropriateness of health service due to cultural background	47.4
Other problems	5.3

* This percentage is based on a total of 19 immigrants who reported facing problems while accessing healthcare services.

Immigrants made varied comments about why they felt "due to cultural background they received inappropriate healthcare." One immigrant reported being isolated into a separate room when he went to the hospital emergency. It was assumed he had a tropical disease even when it was just an ordinary cold. Also, on two separate incidents immigrants explained that their spouses were admitted to the hospital, and the nurses refused to provide care and the doctor discharged them without receiving treatment. In another immigrant's own words:

After my surgery, I was asked to look out for redness around my cut but with a black skin the colour to look for is not redness. My sore became infected because I was looking for redness which did not show up on my black skin.

There were several other comments made about "long hours of waiting in the hospital" as well as "racial problems."

Accessing a doctor was reported to be the number one service that most immigrants used followed by hospital emergency. Most problems experienced have been associated with the latter. As can be seen from Table 3 above it has not been so much of a problem for most immigrants to find a doctor, in fact only 2 people out of 19 immigrants who faced problems had trouble finding a doctor. These experiences suggest without doubt that for a good number of African immigrants their healthcare needs were not being met appropriately when they visited the emergency unit of hospitals. There is also anecdotal evidence, that African immigrants have faced language barriers and may be cultural barriers too. The table shows that at least 26.3% of the immigrants who faced problems were encountering language and/or communication and cultural barriers in trying to access healthcare in Nova Scotia.

Psychological Effects of Immigration

During our interviews and focus groups, immigrants shied away from discussing the issue of mental health. One immigrant who touched on the subject commented that her mother, who had never been to the hospital in their country, often visited the hospital here for psychological reasons, without anything particularly wrong with her physically. With the loss of her cultural ties, community of relatives and friends, she relied on healthcare professionals to fulfill the role that her community once played. Some immigrants admitted feeling considerable stress from the demanding process of coping with a new life in Canada; learning a new language and culture, racism, adjustment in family roles, loneliness, limited opportunities and a host of other factors. However, they have not considered stress as an illness needing healthcare attention, because it's not perceived to be culturally acceptable to visit a psychiatrist. In their culture it's associated with mental retardation. Even if they were to visit one, immigrants felt that it would have to be someone with a cross-cultural approach to psychiatry.

As noted earlier, the literature on mental healthcare services provides a number of factors that contribute to immigration-related stress. The most notable factors are relative socio-economic status, host country settlement policies and programs for services and host country tolerance and attitudes towards immigrants.

When asked to choose the from the questionnaire suggestions necessary to improve healthcare service delivery, most African immigrants chose the following suggestions, in order of importance:

- Need to provide orientation and information sessions about the Canadian Healthcare System
- Need for a referral list of doctors experienced with the immigrant population
- Need for greater representation of African immigrants as healthcare providers
- Need for interpretation/translation services
- Need to have emergency procedures translated into diverse African languages

Some immigrants were of the view that Canada should accommodate immigrant doctors to fill some of the cultural gaps found in the healthcare system. According to one immigrant interviewed, *"Some immigrants are doctors with diverse cultural experiences. When you hear the side of Canada which says 'we want to create opportunities for our new graduates instead of taking from overseas,' you wonder how immigrant doctors would be included…you need the balance and mix."*

In the May 24, 1999 edition of The Globe & Mail an article was written about the underemployment of immigrants in Toronto. "Doctors who immigrate to Canada (with the exception of Quebec) have to pass through a series of exams and internships before being allowed to practice – regardless of their previous experience. The exams alone cost thousands of dollars, and access to the internships is limited, even for those who pass the exams." (p. B3)

Research on healthcare delivery has also shown some evidence that cultural and/or linguistic factors may be a barrier to equitable access to healthcare. Speaking about the need for bilingual/bicultural professionals, Downing (1992) observed that,

- The ideal healthcare provider, health educator or other professional who assists immigrant populations is one who shares the language and culture of the populations being served, especially one who is a member of the immigrant group. Such persons are more likely to know the recipients' needs and desires. They are able to reach the people with health education that is acceptable and accessible in both cultural and linguistic terms. (p. 37)

Access to Housing

The housing experiences of respondents varied. For some immigrants there were few, if any, complaints about their situation. Many immigrants interviewed came as students and learned through their 'student years' about housing options. For some immigrants, public housing became a rented apartment that culminated in home ownership.

The questionnaire focussed on immigrants' experiences of accessing different kinds of housing such as public housing and other housing options. Questions were also asked concerning any problems encountered while searching for housing and any experiences with the Tenancy Board.

Table 4
Housing Utilization by African Immigrants

	Frequency			Percentage	Valid
	Yes	No	Total	(%)	Per cent
Valid Public Housing	32*	53	85	37.6	37.6
Cooperative Housing	4	81	85	4.7	4.7
Boarding Rooms	3	82	85	3.5	3.5
Private Homes	15	70	85	17.6	17.6
University Residence	17	68	85	20.0	20.0
Hostels	1	84	85	1.2	1.2
Rental Apartment	43	42	85	50.6	50.6
Purchased Property	19	66	85	22.4	22.4
Other Housing Type	4	81	85	4.7	4.7

* People were asked to report all types of housing they ever used since they came to Nova Scotia

Types of Housing in Nova Scotia

Public housing offers affordable housing. It is accessible to all that qualify. After an application has been made, the Tenant selection committee assesses and approves applications. The lease is available from month to month or year to year. Thirty per cent of the housing units are for seniors or people without dependents. Subsidized units are available with a subsidy of 25% of gross household income. There are a variety of units available from a bachelor apartment to a family unit that has three bedrooms. Such units are available across the city with a concentration of high rise apartment buildings in the downtown area.

In February of 1998 the provincial government took over the administration of cooperative housing. The government role is specific to the administrative aspect of running the cooperatives, that is, keeping mortgages current, giving subsidies and meeting general operating needs. Each cooperative is a "mini-housing authority" as they manage their own property. The Cooperative Housing Association of Nova Scotia is the contact for details on each particular co-op. For $2.00 anyone can purchase a list of cooperative units throughout the province and then make applications directly. Subsidized units are available for 25–30 per cent of gross family income.

The responses from the questionnaire show that 32 respondents out of 85 (37.6%) have used public housing. Yet only 4 people (4.7%) have used cooperative housing. It may be assumed that cooperative housing is not well known within immigrant communities. One African immigrant who was interested in cooperative housing was told that he and his family needed a sponsor within the co-op. This can easily be perceived as an exclusionary practice. The cooperative housing manager explained that this was possible because each cooperative is able to make bylaws, and sponsorship may be one. An area for further review would be the various policies of the Cooperative Housing Association of Nova Scotia. One recommendation would be to have an African immigrant representative involved in the Cooperative Housing Association of Nova Scotia. It is believed that it would be to the benefit of African immigrants to have access to more public housing information and options.

The majority of respondents who lived in public housing received subsidies. Twenty-three of the thirty-two (71.9%) used public housing for only one year. Only one respondent (3.1%) lived in public housing for more than two years. We may presume from the length of stay in public housing it is used for immigrants in transition and does not appear to be a permanent housing choice.

Two comments were made during our interviews specifically aimed at public housing. One woman voiced her concern about the stigma attached to public housing.

"They're beautiful houses, but once you get into those sorts of houses, it will be humiliating for your kids, everyone will know those people are on welfare..."

Another woman, who is living in public housing complained about the maintenance of her apartment.

"The fan was too dirty and I say I want for them to fix but they say you have to pay more money to fix it. I say why. They say that's the housing rule, if you want, move. I say I don't want to move."

The majority of respondents, seventeen (53.1%) who lived in public housing resided in a family unit. Five (15.6%) lived in two bedroom units and four (12.5%) lived in one bedroom units. Five (15.6%) lived in two bedroom units and four (12.5%) lived in one bedroom units. Eighteen people (56.3%) waited less than six months for a unit. Five people (15.6%) waited between seven and twelve months and three people (9.4%) waited over twenty-four months.

Of the four respondents who used cooperative housing, fifty per cent waited less than seven months for a unit. Two people (50%) lived in a family unit. Three people (75%) of the respondents lived in cooperative housing for a year. Two (50%) received a housing subsidy.

Similarities in public housing and cooperative housing can be seen in the length of time most people were on the waiting list and the length of their lease. The Metropolitan Housing Authority has no tracking system. Therefore, aside from this study, we are not able to monitor how many African immigrants rely on this housing and how long they stay. Yet without a system created to study African immigrants experiences, we will only understand a piece of the whole housing picture.

From the information shown in Table 4, it is clear that the majority of respondents have lived in rental apartments. Boarding rooms, hostels and cooperative housing were the least used. One reason for the use of rental apartments may be the factor of choice in location. Public housing, including cooperative housing, relies on a system of availability versus choice (although transfers are available).

Another factor in the housing options chosen may have to do with lack of knowledge of what is available. In discussions with the housing authority the lack of a strong outreach program was cited as an area for improvement.

Government Funding Programs

There are various small funding programs available to new homeowners and low-income earners. The information for all these programs was found in the municipal office out in Bedford. Other avenues of outreach were named as the Internet, the Home Show and word of mouth. This appears to be an ineffective system. Immigrants must have easy access to such information. Ideally, these sorts of programs and all housing information pamphlets and brochures could be translated into various languages and made available in a central, publicized location.

Race and Location

Numerous times in our interviews and focus groups, immigrants commented on racial stereotyping and housing locations.

Discussing his experiences shopping for a house:

"I could just read between the lines, what he thought about where I should be, by the kinds of houses he was showing me."

"My husband came [to teach at the university] so he came and he had his links all taken care of. It was easy; he wasn't satisfied though. When my husband came and saw the apartment they had chosen for him, he didn't like it. He went out and looked for one right away; he didn't even take it for one day. Because they had decided that he had to live in a certain neighborhood, in a certain place at a certain level."

Obviously it is necessary to fight against the racial assumptions and perceptions of so-called "appropriate" housing options. To win this battle one person noted,

"A lot has to do with how you can move in terms of confidence."

Major factors in demanding your rights involve your proficiency in English and the general level of understanding of the housing "system."

Table 5
Source of Housing Information

Source of Housing Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
MISA	5	5.9
Friend	41	48.2
Family	14	16.5
Church	4	4.7
Immigration Officer Abroad	2	2.4
Newspaper	22	25.9
Other Students	16	18.8
Other	7	8.2

This table clearly shows the heavy reliance of friends to help African immigrants find housing. It is necessary to ask how informed friends and other students are. This table also shows how few immigrants (5.9%) are accessing the service of MISA when looking for housing information.

Most immigrants interviewed relied on other immigrants for help in finding accommodations.

"Somebody told us, we get all our information from each other. If they tell me they like it, I will feel more comfortable with that."

Possible problems may arise within this reliance on community. If long term immigrants lack information and new immigrants are relying solely on that source, housing services may be underutilized. It will not matter what policy is written. If immigrants are not informed they will remain unaffected by policy changes and improvements.

Tenancy Board

Few immigrants have used the Tenancy Board. For many (78.8%) there has been no need. Others who did not use the Tenancy Board, 14.1% named lack of knowledge as the main reason for not using this service. For others, an uncertainty/fear was noted. We interviewed an immigrant who was living in the only apartment in her whole building that had not been renovated, every other unit had new carpets installed and had been painted. She has accepted this situation but is unhappy. When asked why she had not gone to the Tenancy Board she stated simply, *"I don't want to cause problems."*

Out of 85 people only 5 (5.9%) of the respondents had used the service provided by the Tenancy Board. It is disturbing to note that only one person found that the Tenancy Board was helpful. It is recommended that African immigrants have an advocate who can represent their case at the Tenancy Board. This may encourage immigrants who are unhappy with their housing situation but who feel language or knowledge of the system is a hindrance in seeking out the service of the Tenancy Board. An area for further review would be to investigate the reasons for dissatisfaction with the Tenancy Board.

Purchasing Property

There were 19 respondents (22.45) who purchased their own property. When asked to describe their experiences in trying to purchase property, 6 people (32%) faced problems. These problems ranged from a lack of credit history and no permanent jobs to secure the mortgage to a lack of information of the purchasing process.

Racism was stated clearly as an issue for one respondent in purchasing property. Another person had an issue with the property inspector.

"The inspector we got to inspect the house to give us an idea about the condition of the house, well he inspected the house, cashed the cheque and never gave us a written report to let us know the condition of the house. We had to pay another inspector to do the job."

One suggestion made by a respondent was to produce real estate agents among the African immigrant community. Another suggestion was to create a service where African immigrants who are looking for a house can get information and support.

Problems and Barriers in Finding and Renting Housing

In their comments of problems and barriers faced in finding housing, fourteen respondents reported having problems in finding housing. Their problems ranged from racial, excessive damage deposit required, lack of references from previous landlords, and being rejected due having more than three children. Blatant discrimination was recounted on more than one occasion.

"...[T]here were no vacancies but when my white wife went to look at the same place she was told there were apartments available"

During an interview one informant remembered looking for an apartment.

"I took a taxi from the residence to the place. When I got there the owner was no longer there but someone was there to say that the owner had rented the apartment. And I asked to use the telephone to call a taxi... she wouldn't let me use the phone."

Suggestions for Improving Access to Housing Services

Numerous suggestions were given to improve the housing experiences for African immigrants. Out of fifteen responses to the question of improving access to housing services, nine were aimed at educating immigrants and Canadians through improved information access. Comments concerning information include

- General need for more information
- Provide a guide to finding housing
- Give orientation sessions about the housing market in Nova Scotia
- Increase the availability of information about conditions before immigrants leave their country of birth
- Provide a record of reliable people to use when buying property
- Display housing information where it can be easily accessed
- Explain public housing requirements
- Provide orientation sessions for Canadians so as to avoid misunderstandings
- Educate public housing officials

Education is consistently named as the greatest need in virtually all areas of access and delivery of social services. This study shows that the majority of immigrants are relying on their friends for housing information. Thus, we can concentrate a part of this overall education to specific community leaders who spread the information to a large audience. The demands of this education are far-reaching and include African immigrants and social service providers. Yet for one respondent, there is little hope in education, "I don't know how these racists can be changed."

Settlement Services

In this section the settlement services available to African immigrants and refugees will be presented and analyzed. The Metropolitan Immigration Settlement Association (MISA) offers services to landed immigrants and is perceived to be the largest service provider in the province. The Catholic Pastoral Centre offers services to refugee claimants. There is a third agency, Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures that provides a number of services available to African immigrants. The intention of these settlement agencies is to aid and assist immigrants in their settlement and integration into Canadian society. The purpose of studying these agencies was for an evaluation of their services and also to explore new avenues to improve service to African immigrants if needed. Issues faced by government sponsored refugees involving the Department of Immigration and Citizenship will also be explored.

The Metropolitan Immigration Settlement Association began in 1980. More than 50% of their funding comes from the Department of Citizenship and Education.[4] MISA works with government-assisted refugees and landed immigrants. If one does not fit into either category, they will be informed of the services provided by the Catholic Pastoral Centre.

The Catholic Pastoral Centre began in the late 70s and early 80s. Church members wanted to help people. (This centre assists people of all religions.) There are a variety of services offered which include dealing with government documents and interviews, hospitals, dentists, schooling, clothes, acting as reference for jobs as well as spiritual care.

The Centre for Diverse Visible Cultures is over two years old. The goal of this centre is in "providing harmony and integration among all people." The people who created the centre recognized gaps in the support framework for newcomers and visible minorities. That is, some organizations because of their funding specifications were not able to meet all the needs of newcomers, landed immigrants and citizens. There are a number of programs offered. These programs include English as a Second Language, Family Literacy, Refugee Asylum Seekers Program, and a Legal Advisory Clinic. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the Nova Scotia Department of Education fund these programs. Fundraising, membership fees and private sources provide the rest of the financing.

The centre is presently working on a project in conjunction with the Department of Education. This project will see the creation of a web site with every imaginable service available to newcomers, immigrants and visible minorities. This information will be available in libraries and schools and for anyone with Internet access. There will also be pamphlets provided and a twenty-four hour hotline. Discussions are underway concerning translation.

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4 Other sources of funding are: Department of Canadian Heritage, Human Resources and Development Canada, Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development and Tourism as well as Membership fees and private donations.]

Questionnaire Results

When asked which settlement agencies had been utilized by the respondents we found that 59% of African immigrants have relied on universities, churches, African Associations, the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia and others. Only 22.4% of the respondents reported using the services of MISA.

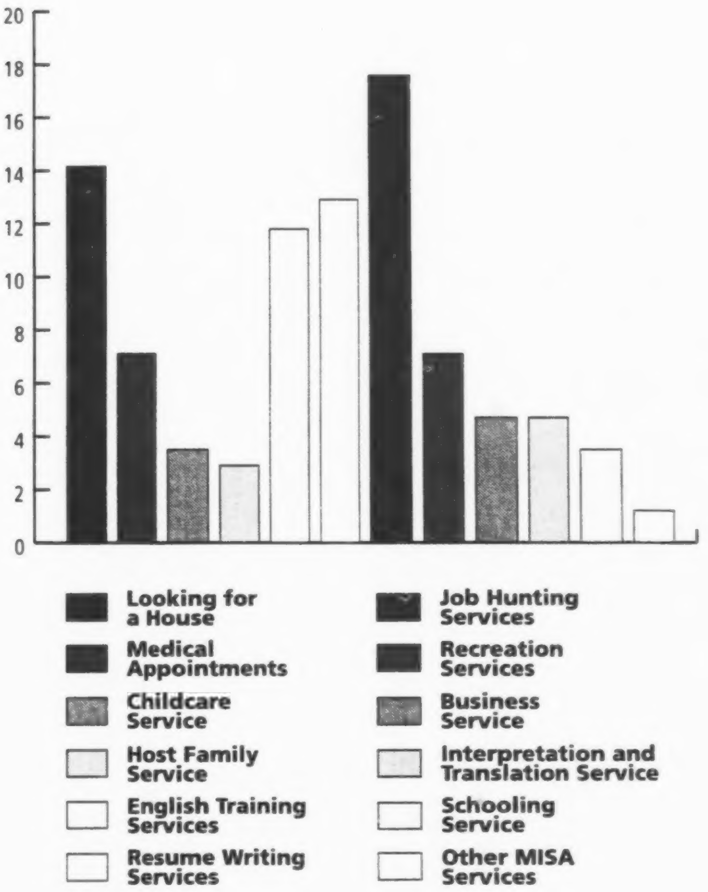
For people who have used these services, they were asked how useful the services were in helping them adjust and integrate. The responses varied, ranging from MISA not being useful, because they were perceived to assist only refugees…to a feeling that MISA was more helpful to European and Latin Americans than to Africans. Three people reported not being satisfied with the services provided and because they "did not know MISA existed" and that "the services were inadequate" and "not very useful."

Those who praised MISA were pleased with the support they received in obtaining necessary information for finding job, apartments, shopping and linking up with host families.

The following table and graph show the utilization of MISA services by respondents.

Table 6
Utilization of MISA services by immigrants

MISA Services	Frequency Total = 85	Percentage (%)	Mean Statistic
Looking for a house	12	14.1	3.42
Medical appointments	6	7.1	3.67
Childcare service	3	3.5	1.67
Host family service	5	5.9	2.60
English training services	10	11.8	3.90
Resume writing service	11	12.9	4.00
Job hunting service	15	17.6	3.00
Recreation services	6	7.1	2.50
Business service	4	4.7	2.00
Interpretation and Translation service	4	4.7	2.50
Schooling service	3	3.5	3.67
Other MISA services	1	1.2	1.00



Satisfaction Response for MISA Services

Respondents who had utilized the services of MISA were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the service provided. The levels of satisfaction ranging from 1 – very dissatisfied, 2 – dissatisfied, 3 – satisfied, 4 – somewhat satisfied, to 5 – very satisfied.

The table and accompanying chart show that the services provided by MISA are not used by a large number of African immigrants. In general, African immigrants are going to MISA to receive information on employment, housing and resume writing. The other services and programs provided by MISA appear to be underutilized by African immigrants.

The services that gained the highest satisfaction rating were English language training and resume writing. The services that received the lowest satisfaction rating were childcare and the entrepreneurial program.

An area that MISA needs to focus more effort is in their outreach program. When we met with the Acting Director, she recognized that outreach was a priority. Presently there is a committee working on ways to publicize the services of MISA to a wider audience. One recommendation would be for MISA to promote themselves at the Halifax International Airport. While initial investigations with the airport have not been successful, it is a goal worth pursuing. It would appear that a number of African immigrants are not properly informed about the services provided by MISA. The following comments were made during interviews and focus groups.

"The first time I heard about MISA was when I was in Edmonton. I had no idea, no prior knowledge of MISA."

"I know about MISA but I don't know what MISA does, I know they welcome immigrant women, no immigrant families, that's about all I know about MISA."

There were only two people we spoke to who appreciated the services of MISA.

"I am grateful. If I need something photocopied, my resume changed, I call them and every time when I call them they are ready to help me. They're nice..."

Other Settlement Services

Respondents who did not use the services of MISA reported that they have used the following types of services indicated in Table 7 below.

Table 7
Utilization of Other Settlement Agencies

Other Services	Frequency Total = 85	Percentage (%)	Mean Statistic
Catholic Pastoral Centre	4	4.7	4.5
Church community	4	4.8	4.25
African/Caribbean associations	7	8.3	4.00
Canadian family	4	4.8	4.25
Educational/university institutions	18	21.2	4.33
Multicultural Association of NS	5	6	3.00
Immigrant women associations	2	2.4	3.00
Other settlement services	6	7.1	4.00

This table shows that 46 or (54%) people used other services to help with their settlement experiences compared to 22.4% who used MISA. Possibly the large number of respondents who relied on their universities for service support represent the highest proportion of respondents. People who used the services of the Catholic Pastoral Centre showed the greatest level of satisfaction with a code of 4.5 for "Very Useful." Six out of the eight services used received a response stating their service were somewhat useful and very useful.

Suggestions for Improvements

We also asked if there had been information needs that were not adequately addressed, and what suggestions immigrants had for improvement. The suggestions given speak to the need for greater outreach by service providers and more information about the African immigrant population.

- Have other African immigrants orient the new arrivals
- Create a data base of Africans for newcomers to ask for information
- Educate newcomers about racism so they are not shocked when they are exposed to it

Department of Immigration and Citizenship Government Sponsored Refugee Program

- Canada can be described as a multicultural society whose racial and ethnic diversity is expressed in different ways. In recent years, a vigorous immigration policy has attracted a growing number of applicants from non-traditional sources such as Asia, Africa, Central America and the Caribbean. (Leman, 1997, p. 1)

With such racial and ethnic diversity it may be assumed that there would be a need for diverse services which recognize and support the differences in the immigrant and refugee population. At the present time, it would appear that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship do not view immigrants and refugees as having any differences. We spoke to a settlement officer, who explained clearly, "I do everything with one word—fairness. I don't look at nationalities, I look at them the same." Again, one can see the weaknesses of this liberal notion of fairness and non-discriminatory practice.

"We are not in one package. We are individuals. We are not coming with a package of instructions."

Refugees we interviewed told of us certain difficult experiences encountered during their first year of adjustment. Three areas of concern included the furniture supplied, language study and finances. When we relayed these experiences to the settlement officer at the Department of Immigration and Culture, she said, "I find this hard to believe." During our conversation it became apparent that one-on-one contact with officers and refugees has been cut back. The results are of detriment to the service received by refugees.

The settlement officer stated that we spoke to is "open to hearing how we can break down barriers." A recommendation is to increase the contact between refugees and settlement officers. This contact could come in the form of casual monthly one-or two-hour meetings with an open invitation to hear about refugee issues. Or a more formal arrangement could involve representatives from various refugee communities consulting with the department, voicing the areas of greatest concern. This would address what appears to be a lack of shared information. Part of the department's policy is to monitor clients, "but that doesn't always happen."

It is recommended that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration provide more flexibility in the programs it funds, as some immigrants felt that "the system kept them in a box." This flexibility would provide funding for specific groups as opposed to the present system which supports proposals that reach the largest number of people possible.

- In some communities, there has been a long-standing problem of governments failing to recognize that multicultural and ethnic specific organizations provide essential social services to their communities. (MacLeod & Shin, 1990, p.21)

Such flexibility in funding would be an effort to expand upon the notion of equality thus allowing the system to incorporate difference.

Adequacy, Not Excellence

The overall impression from the study of settlement services available to African immigrants is a sense of adequacy, not excellence. There are many areas for improvement as the numerous recommendations throughout this section have highlighted. Such actions will be of benefit to the service providers and most importantly to African immigrants.

Credit and Banking

For every immigrant we spoke to, there appeared to be a different banking experience. These experiences ranged from being hassle-free to experiences wrought with discrimination and racism. Access to the services provided by a bank should be open and available to anyone. Opening a bank account and receiving a loan to start a new business are both services of a bank. There are certain criteria which banks have decided must be complied to for accessing loans, mortgages and other specific services.

It became apparent through our interviews and focus groups, that banking can be a source of confusion, frustration and disappointment for some immigrants. Those who encountered difficulties felt the system had the possibility of being racist.

"An officer you are dealing with will have to make a personal judgement of you so that is where the discrimination comes in..."

"There is racism when it comes to giving credit. I've asked to see the criteria [for credit] so I can meet them. 'Oh no, it's internal, we don't share it with the public. Well, how do I know you're not making it up just because it's me?"

"I've been asked for co-signers in situations where somebody that was white with the same profile would not be asked."

In our questionnaire, respondents were asked about the types of credit and services they had applied for, the services they had received and which services were declined and the reasons given in such a case. The following table lists the responses.

Table 8
Banking Information

	Frequency: Applications	Frequency: Approvals	Percentage of Approvals (%)
Personal loan	26	21	81
Credit cards	47	42	89
Overdraft protection	13	8	62
Mortgage	20	20	100
Student loan	23	22	96
Business loan	2	1	
Bank account	38	39	

The above table indicates a high number of successful applicants. There were eight respondents who answered question 13 (d) asking their opinion on why their application had been declined. The following is the list of the reasons given were immigration status and not trusted, lack of trust, racial problem, having an unusual name, new to the country and did not have anyone to co-sign, racism, nationality and race and two people stated lack of credit history as being the reason for the refusal.

Problems Faced with Banking and Financial Institutions

Twelve people described problems they had experienced while dealing with a bank or financial institution. These problems ranged from general dissatisfaction with level of courtesy shown, miscommunication with the bank, not having credit history in the country, difficulty in securing a business loan, racial problems, no visible immigrant representation in the system to complaints about high service charges. One person stated,

"They keep saying they don't understand my accent. It is frustrating because it is the same accent that some of these whites understand when you are not demanding anything from them."

During our interviews and focus groups many of the above listed problems were discussed. It was noted that Canada is a *"...credit card culture..."* and understanding the credit system is an essential skill. Virtually all immigrants suggested educating new immigrants and also providing ongoing information sessions of a banking and credit nature. One recommendation of this report is to invite banking officers and immigrants with Canadian banking experience to provide yearly workshops/information sessions for interested African immigrants.

Suggestion to Improve Banking Experiences

There were a number of other suggestions offered by respondents answering the question on ways to improve the process of credit card application including

- Set up an option for immigrants to seek reference letters from Immigration for their banking applications

- Sensitivity training for banking staff to make them more aware and accepting of diverse members of the Nova Scotian community
- Workshops on credit management
- Find more people willing to be co-sponsors
- Educate African immigrants to start saving $20-$50 a month to create a stable account
- Make personal contact with people in the banks and develop relationships with them

Recommendations to Improve the Delivery of and Access to Banking and Credit Services

Not understanding the banking and credit system appears to be a major obstacle for immigrants, not just new immigrants. Two recommendations are presented for improving the banking service to African immigrants. One recommendation as stated above is to offer continual banking and credit information sessions, which would be open to all African immigrants. The second recommendation involves ongoing training of bank personnel in the area of diversity and cultural sensitivity.

Community Services

For the purpose of this research, the community services studied were social assistance, employment insurance, childcare subsidies, family benefits, English training courses and other training courses.

Ather H. Akbari, an economist at Saint Mary's University, makes this reference to immigrants' utilization of social assistance:

- They use fewer welfare services on average than do native-born Canadians and they contribute as members of the labour force. My own research and that of others support this view in Canada, the United States, Germany and Switzerland. (Sinclair-Jones, 1995, p.26)

The Department of Community Services does not ask those applying for social assistance if they are immigrants for non-discriminatory reasons. When asked how many African immigrants are applying the rough estimate a District Manager with the Department of Community Services made was for every 1,000 applicants, he would be surprised if there were 5 immigrants applying for assistance. Below is a table for community service utilization from respondents of the questionnaire.

Table 9
Community Services Utilization

	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean statistic
Used social assistance/welfare	16	19.0	3.31
Used employment insurance	19	22.4	4.00
Used childcare subsidies	18	21.2	4.47
Used Family Benefits service	8	9.4	3.71
Used English training service	4	4.7	4.00
Used other training programs	4	4.7	4.20

The level of satisfaction range from 1 – very dissatisfied. 2 – somewhat dissatisfied 3 – somewhat satisfied. 4 – satisfied and 5 – very satisfied. Results from the questionnaire show satisfaction with the quality of four out of the five community services.

As the above table shows, only a small number of African immigrants who responded to our questionnaire have accessed programs provided by the Department of Community Services. Out of a total of 85 respondents, 16 (19%) accessed social assistance and of this group, four (25%) reported having had problems. One of the problems involved communication with social workers due to a language barrier. Another person noted the need for excessive and in his mind, unnecessary documentation, including school certificates. A suggestion was made by someone else of the need to train social workers to understand immigrants' needs.

Training social workers also was discussed in our focus group. One person said,

"The government when they hire, especially those who have to deal with people, they have to select the right people, they have to get people who studied psychology... They should be selective about the people who do social work."

Training social workers to appreciate the unique experiences of their clients is a useful suggestion. Yet, as one director of community services stated, immigrants are "treated like any other person." This government policy of equality and fairness should be applauded except that African immigrants may, in particular circumstances have special needs, i.e. linguistic, and cultural. "One study (on access to family service agencies in Metro Toronto) points to four major systemic barriers: lack of recognition of ethnicity and racial factors; lack of capacity to address language concerns; inappropriateness of methods of service delivery; and location of offices". (Sinclair-Jones, 1995, p. 18). For community services to improve upon the delivery of their various services, recognition and action on the four listed areas of concern will be important.

The intention for training social workers would be to provide a greater understanding of immigrants' experiences. One recommendation would be to organize interested immigrants who have used social services, to participate in a panel discussion for students at the Maritime School of Social Work. This type of workshop could also be provided for workers in community service. Diversity training is provided but there is no special training on immigrant needs. When speaking to one community service worker the following comments were made, "We're told these people [immigrants] are going to be self-sufficient... it gets on my nerves how easy it is to get on social assistance." This type of commentary speaks clearly to the need for more understanding and empathy by service providers. This same person continued stating that some immigrants figure out how to "work the system." Within an equal-opportunity service, some immigrants, "don't know loopholes, some have learned better than others."

Flexibility in programs and services will improve the access and delivery of social services to the African immigrant. This flexibility would provide childcare for refugees who stop taking English training to begin training in a professional field. This flexibility would allow recipients to have childcare while searching for work. One woman commented on her experience with social assistance.

"Social assistance helped us for three months after that three months they didn't want to pay for childcare, that's why my daughter stay home with me. I asked them to help me and pay for childcare. I want to find a job but they refused that is not good."

Perhaps one reason many African immigrants are not accessing social services involves a lack of information about the services available. During an interview this comment was made concerning community services:

"I believe that the systems are there and I think the system will help anyone… it's all there for them if they know what to do, where to go and how to get it."

As one director of community services noted, the services are for "anyone in need" but he continued, "we don't advertise."

Caring For Our children

In 1985, the childcare needs of immigrants were studied in the Report of the Task Force on Childcare.

- There are a number of childcare problems experienced by immigrants that are identical to those faced by the general population, but which have a special impact on immigrants. In addition, immigrants have special childcare needs beyond those shared with non-immigrants. (Downie, 1985, p. 3)

Fourteen years later and the issues presented in the 1985 report remain the same.

- Foreign-born women have higher rates of labour force participation than Canadian-born women; a larger proportion of immigrant women work for a longer period of time than their Canadian counterpart. (Downie, 1985, p. 3)

The immigrant mothers we spoke to commented on the difficulty in finding work when they were expected to stay at home with their children.

"If you take welfare money, the welfare doesn't pay for daycare. You have to stay home and take care of your children, but when you get work, you don't have a spot for daycare!"

For another mother, wishing to pursue studies in a professional field the lack of flexibility in the government-sponsored refugee program was a problem.

"I want my life changed. I didn't finish my year [of language training] so I didn't have childcare anymore."

There were 65 respondents who had children. Of these 65 parents, 18 or 28% reported using childcare subsidies. Similarly to other community services, African immigrants were not always well informed of childcare subsidies. "When we came in 1982, we didn't even know about subsidy system."

Many immigrant families are unaware that subsidies are available; even if they do know about them, they have difficulty obtaining them because of language problems and lack of familiarity with the system. (Downie, 1985, p. 4)

Once children were in daycare or in schools, there were other issues, which became apparent for African immigrant parents.

"I put my two year old in a daycare, the daycare people, the others they'll be telling how the child did this, the child did that, and your child, they never tell you anything about your child."

"There are shortcomings: children need models that reflect their identities. The picture is not complete without having one or two people on staff that reflect the identity of the immigrant child."

Thus, childcare for African immigrants' children goes beyond issues of subsidies and daycare, it is a constant issue throughout the schooling years. Work must continue for diversity and cultural sensitivity in the curriculum and in the teaching staff.

In the spring of 1999, the African Women's' Association produced a pilot project to address the cultural needs of African immigrant children. The "Africa School" was held every Saturday. It combined academic work with dance and music using an Afrocentric teaching approach. It is recommended that this program continue as it offers a service to African immigrant children that does not presently exist elsewhere. The next stage of this type of cultural service would involve extending the program to reach a greater number of children of all ethnic backgrounds.

When government policy makers, immigrant parents and teachers form a group, become a team and work together, it will be possible to create a schooling environment that children deserve.

Welfare and Public Opinion

Discussing social assistance, interviewees were asked to share any of their experiences.

"We never have to depend on the system. I think the system depended on us. We never collected unemployment all our working life. Never, not one day."

"When they can't meet the requirements [newcomers] and they try and integrate themselves and when it doesn't work out then they're the ones who become a burden on the social system. And they're the ones who give us a bad name."

Thus within the African immigrant population interviewed one sees a variety of experiences and beliefs concerning social services. Research has also been conducted to investigate the general public's opinion on immigration and social services. From 1992 to 1994, Ekos Research Associates advised the federal government on public opinion regarding immigration. In their 1992 report, they state that 43 per cent of Canadians agree that "too many immigrants take advantage of social programs such as welfare.' By 1994, Ekos reports a steady increase in

Canadians who believe that there are "too many immigrants" – up from 30 per cent in 1988 to 53 per cent in 1994 (Sinclair-Jones, 1991, p. 20). Another report conducted in Ontario found a major shift in sentiment towards immigrants within the years 1993 – 1995.

- The overall scene is one of reduced funding to the mainstream social services sector, and major cuts to the community agencies that counteract barriers to access to services for immigrants. These recent trends mirror the changes in other countries, confirming the view that globalization of economic systems is having a major effect on Canadian policy. (Sinclair-Jones, 1995, p. 2)

Where will the leaders lead us?

At the time of writing this report, Nova Scotia has elected a new government. Time will tell if Premier John Hamm's Progressive Conservatives cut or build social services. Travelling around the province and meeting with immigrants during the election campaign provided an interesting backdrop for the leadership debates taking place within the African immigrant population. From Yarmouth, through Halifax and into Cape Breton, African immigrants consistently debated the issues of leadership and organization amongst African immigrants.

"We need to mobilize ourselves as African people. We need a common voice to advocate our problems and our issues..."

"There is no organization, it's all fragmented. You find yourself going alone. That is at the community level, at the provincial level, we still have the same problem. There is no solid organization that speaks for the entire Black organizations or for the African Canadian in general."

These comments bring out the strong desire amongst many African immigrants for a larger, stronger, more powerful voice at a provincial level. Presently, there are a number of individual organizations serving African immigrants here in Nova Scotia,

African Associations

Of the 85 respondents to the question of membership in any African or Caribbean association, 39 people were members of an association. (Please refer to Appendix E for a complete list of the sixteen different organizations named.) When asked how important the associations were in helping to adjust and integrate into Canadian life responses clearly indicated the great importance these associations are for many people. Answers varied from "extremely important in understanding the education system, parent advocacy, and networking" to "essential in assisting new immigrants to adjust to a new environment." For one woman, her association helped her meet other African women, for another woman, she learned where to get African food through her association. It also helped to "reduce homesickness" for one respondent.

Alas, these associations are not without problems. During the four months of this research project, four associations in the city of Halifax had stopped meeting. Reasons for their demise varied from in-house politics to at-home country politics. One association had the majority of its members leave the province looking for a better life elsewhere. These associations provide important services to their members. It is hoped that disbanded associations will be brought back to life so that all African immigrants can access their benefits.

While realizing that at the present time there are a number of barriers stopping a larger association of African immigrants to organize themselves, nonetheless, this umbrella type of organization is recommended to provide a voice/voices for African immigrants. Ideally, individual associations could send representatives to meet as members of a Nova Scotian African Association that would work to speak out and fight for the rights and needs of African immigrants in Nova Scotia.

Recommendations

Improved information provision for all community services available to immigrants is one of the main recommendations of this report. There are many services that appear to be underutilized by African immigrants. With a greater knowledge of all community services, African immigrants will be able to make informed decisions.

Access to Legal Services

Most immigrants are aware of the existence of legal aid services available to them in the community but most people interviewed did not express much need or knowledge of the service. Again, this may be due to their high levels of education and awareness. Most professional immigrants are more likely to afford private legal services when needed. A few immigrants reported to have utilized legal aid services, and these were mainly new immigrants as well as the refugee immigrant class. These immigrants reported the type of services needed to be immigration-related matters.

In an interview with Dalhousie Legal Aid, the Community Outreach Officer indicated that their services are available to anyone in the low income bracket. Like other agencies that we interviewed Legal Aid agencies do not keep a breakdown of statistics of their clients by ethnic grouping, hence they gave no indication of service utilization by African immigrants. However, the general feeling revealed that African immigrants were not utilizing their services perhaps as much as they should. They thought that this might be due to a lack of knowledge of their existence. When asked about their outreach efforts, they stated that they have links with local universities, and other community-based organizations such as African Canadian Employment Clinic. While they have no outreach program directly linked with MISA they provide legal information sessions through MISA on an ad hoc basis.

In our questionnaire we asked immigrants if they had accessed any legal aid services and how satisfied they were with the service. Results show that a handful of immigrants have used the service since they came to Nova Scotia. Only a total 10 respondents out of 85 (12%) reported having used Nova Scotia Society for Legal Aid and Dalhousie Legal Aid. Of the services provided the most utilized was "matters dealing with immigration issues" (accessed 5 times). The rest of the services such as "family violence", "discrimination in the workplace or school/ schools," "legal representation," "divorce issues/child custody," and "notarization of documents," were accessed twice on average. With respect to satisfaction levels, immigrants reported being "somewhat satisfied" with the service relating to "matters dealing with immigration issues." One immigrant commented that:

"...legal administration - i.e., judges, police attitudes plus behaviours have been problematic."

According to the Community Outreach Officer at Dalhousie Legal Aid, there are some gaps in service provision and access to legal aid. Some of the problems directly impacting on immigrants (including Africans) were identified by respondents to be:

- A lack of resources needed to improve community outreach
- Cultural and language barriers
- Lack of provision of immigration related services (This service is no longer provided).

An overview of these gaps or problems is highlighted in a "Community Consultation Report and Recommendations" that was done by Dalhousie Legal Aid Service in 1998. In this review, some of the key issues raised were the need for an anti-racism education, as well as greater representation of the marginalized, as illustrated in the following comments: (1) "Education of staff which includes anti-racism education, …and inclusion of lawyers who are more representative of the community." (2) "Representation of the marginalized including …appeals for refugees and immigration matters, and divorce for those in abusive situations."

In the Report's summary of recommendations, one of the suggestions that came out was the need to train internal staff on issues of cultural sensitivity and diversity in order to provide an atmosphere where immigrants could feel like they have someone they could call if they needed help, support or advice and not made to feel like "the other." It would appear from both the Consultative Report and the study's finding of low utilization of legal aid services that perhaps involvement of African immigrants in service delivery would be a positive step towards attracting immigrants to utilize legal aid services.

This study presents many of the difficulties of immigrants' experiences in accessing social services in Nova Scotia. The following findings and recommendations highlight the key issues and provide possibilities for improvement.

Findings and Recommendations

Language and Accents

- Lack of English language was identified as limiting options for employment and education and leads to low-level jobs.
- Responsibility of improving communication must be shared with immigrants and mainstream Canadian society.
- The issue of accents was perceived to be controversial. Immigrants in the teaching and telemarketing professions felt accents were a barrier while others felt their accent was a positive attribute or that it did not matter.
- 27.1% of immigrants took language training. 36.4% of this group came to Canada as refugees and 27.3% came as students.
- Immigrants felt there was the need to improve ESL training provided and make the language learning appropriate to the needs of new Canadians.

Access to Health Care

- The majority of immigrants interviewed reported no difficulties understanding the healthcare system and their rights as patients. The existing immigrant community plays an essential role in providing information to newcomers.
- Immigrants perceived discriminatory service while visiting the hospital (i.e. long periods of waiting, lack of or inappropriate communication with hospital staff and unfriendly reception).
- The main issue for the majority of respondents (47.4%) was the inappropriateness of healthcare services due to cultural background.
- At least 26.3% of immigrants who had difficulty in accessing healthcare stated language/ communication or cultural barriers as reasons for the difficulty.
- Although African immigrants admitted having problems associated with "immigrant related stress" it is not perceived to be a cultural norm to consult a psychiatrist. If they were to visit a mental healthcare professional they wished to speak to someone who was culturally sensitive.

Housing

- Quite a large proportion of African immigrants have utilized government sponsored housing schemes at some point in time in Nova Scotia (42.3%). More than half of the applicants for this type of housing waited less than six months to get a unit and 71.9% stayed for only one year.

- Only 4.7% of respondents had used cooperative housing.
- 48.2% of African immigrants relied on friends to give them housing information. The Housing Authority cited the lack of a strong outreach program as an area needing improvement.
- Participants feel that there is general stereotyping concerning which neighborhoods African immigrants should reside.
- Immigrants pointed to the need to provide education on housing services.
- Only 5.9% of respondents had used the services of the Tenancy Board.
- The Metropolitan Housing Authority has no tracking system. Thus, there is no means to monitor how many African immigrants rely on the housing nor how long they stay.
- There are various small funding programs available to new homeowners and low-income earners. This information is available on the Internet, at home shows, by word of mouth and at the Municipal Housing office in Bedford. This appears to be an ineffective system with very limited community access.

Settlement Services

- The majority of African immigrants rely more on other settlement agencies and institutions such as universities, African associations, and churches (59%) than on MISA (22.4%) for settlement support services.
- Of the immigrants who used MISA, 30.5% used the job hunting service followed by 14.1% using housing information services. The least used service was child care (3.5%).
- The Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the refugees they serve have very little "one on one" contact time.

Credit and Banking

- Not many immigrants experienced problems whilst accessing banking or credit facilities; in fact only 14% of questionnaire respondents reported dissatisfaction.
- There was a general feeling that new immigrants needed to be educated to understand the "credit card culture," how it functions and how it can be managed to achieve financial responsibility.

Community Services

- A significant number of African immigrants have accessed programs provided by the Department of Community Services and the most utilized programs are employment insurance (22.4%), childcare subsidies (21.2%), and social assistance/welfare (19%).
- Of the group that used social assistance, 25% encountered problems with social workers.
- African immigrants had difficulty obtaining information about the availability of community services programs as this information is now easily accessible to newcomers in Nova Scotia.

- Most parents complained about the lack of representation of African immigrants in daycare centers and schools and this creates a sense of discomfort for parents and raises questions about the level of caring and comfort for the children.
- Presently there is one program available for African children, "The Africa School" funded by the African Canadian Services Division of the Department of Education and run by the African Canadian Women's Association. This program provides cultural education for African children which is missing in the public school system.
- Thirty-nine out of the eighty-five respondents belonged to a local African association and deemed this relationship to be very important and useful.
- Immigrants all recognized that the African community is presently polarized with no solid voice to advocate their needs and represent their views, thus the urgent need for solidarity was expressed.

Legal Aid Services

- There is a general lack of knowledge of the services provided by Legal Aid.
- Legal Aid services were accessed by only 12% of respondents and these were mainly refugees and relatively new immigrants who needed legal assistance on immigration related matters.

Recommendations

The following actions are recommended to improve the social services delivery and access for African immigrants in Nova Scotia.

- Provision of and/or reinforcement of sensitivity training to individuals involved with service delivery agencies on issues of racism and discrimination in Nova Scotia.
- Provision of cultural sensitivity training to individuals who provide services to immigrants in order to broaden their understanding of various cultures.
- We would encourage service providers to utilize the knowledge of African immigrants as they implement the above training programs.
- Representation of African immigrants on various service agency boards.
- Regular community workshop which provide the opportunity for information sharing amongst service providers and service users.
- There is an urgent need for an African Immigrant Resource Centre. As evidenced in the questionnaire results, 54% of new immigrants are seeking settlement services other than MISA. Hence the need for the resource center aimed at providing African immigrants with the support and understanding they deserve. As noted in the study, there are over sixteen African associations in Nova Scotia who would also benefit from a central meeting place. The aim of this centre would be to provide a place for information sharing, social gatherings, and association meetings.
- Need to emphasize cultural aspect of training to social workers by incorporating immigrant experiences and improving social workers awareness of possible language and cultural barriers.

- Need for the government to design a national program to raise awareness of the desirability of combating prejudice within all communities. i.e. need to provide positive images of African immigrants through the media and our provincial schooling system.
- It is recommended that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration provide more flexibility in funding programs for African immigrants. There is need to involve African immigrants in the improvement of existing programs and general program development.
- Increase representation of African immigrants in areas of social work, childcare, health and mental health and education through provision of scholarships and grants in higher education.

Conclusion

As we have highlighted in the literature review, the African immigrants' historical experiences of migration to Canada have been difficult. First, we have shown how the immigration policy has evolved from a discriminatory stance resulting in small numbers of African immigrants to a more liberal process leading to the growing numbers of African immigrants in Canada. Secondly, we have uncovered from the literature on social service access and delivery that barriers do exist and that certain critical social services have been unavailable to African immigrants in other parts of Canada. These services include, mental health, appropriate housing, inaccessibility to advanced ESL training and limited information access. various aspects of the delivery of and access to social services by African immigrants in Canada. From the literature we can also see examples of barriers that African immigrants face in gaining access to health care, housing, language acquisition and social assistance. The complexity of delivering services to African immigrants is presented with an overview of various models used by social service agencies.

Evidence from personal interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires show numerous needs, barriers and challenges that need to be addressed. One issue is that the Canadian mainstream population is still not fully aware of the contributions and talents that African people have and there is still widespread stereotyping and negativity among many. Another area of concern is the difficulties and challenges faced by African immigrants who arrived as refugees. For these immigrants due to lack of, or poor English their involvement and participation in mainstream society is limited, thus forcing them to remain ostracized and unassimilated.

Based on our interviews with service providers, we found that their view was that services were available to be accessed by anyone. There was no apparent structure in place to meet the diverse needs of African immigrants.

It was not surprising that throughout this study the most glaring barrier to accessing social services is discrimination and racism.

There is anecdotal evidence that African immigrants have faced discrimination in emergency rooms of hospitals, in limited housing options, accessing credit facilities, daily and professional communication and in childcare services.

In accessing health care, the main issue for African immigrants (47.4%) was the inappropriateness of healthcare services due to cultural background. An example of this is in mental health where although African immigrants admitted having problems associated with immigration-related stress, the system was lacking the structures to address immigrants' specific health issues.

We found that MISA is not serving the African immigrant population at large. The majority of African immigrants rely more on other settlement agencies and institutions such as universities, African association, and churches (59%) than on MISA (22.4%) for settlement services.

The challenge for service delivery agencies is to address the gaps in their delivery process. It is imperative to provide more effective outreach programs, to improve upon understanding of diverse cultures and most importantly, to increase African representation in their organizations.

We conclude this study by recommending the creation of an African immigrant Resource Center. The researchers believe this center has the possibilities of addressing many of the gaps apparent in the delivery services to African immigrants.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Schedule of Consultation with Service Delivery Agencies

- Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association
- Metropolitan Regional Housing
- Cooperative Housing
- Public Housing
- Medical Services
- Student Advisory Services
- Family and Child Care Services
- Financial, Banking Services etc
- Legal Aid Services—Dalhousie Legal Services
- Metro Legal Services
- Black Business Initiatives
- African Canadian Employment Clinic
- Human Rights Commission
- Police Department
- African Canadian Services Division of Deptment of Education
- Catholic Pastoral Centre

Appendix B

Project Questionnaire

The African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project

PO Box 578, Halifax, NS B3J 2S9 Phone: (902) 424-2530 Fax: (902) 424-7210

All the Information Provided Shall Remain Strictly Confidential!

A. Personal Information:

1. Age:
   - 16-24 ☐
   - 25-34 ☐
   - 35-44 ☐
   - 45-54 ☐
   - 55-64 ☐
   - Over 65 ☐
2. Gender:
   - Male ☐
   - Female ☐
3. Marital Status:
   - Married ☐
   - Single ☐
   - Common-law ☐
   - Widowed ☐
   - Divorced ☐
4. (a) How many children are in your household ?

   Please circle one: None 1 2 3 4 5 or more

   (b) What are the children's ages
   - 0-5 ☐
   - 6-11 ☐
   - 12 - 17 ☐
   - 18 and above ☐

B. Information Pertaining to Immigration

5. (a) Country of Origin ______________________________

   (b) Period of Arrival in Canada, please check one:
   - Before 1950 ☐
   - 1950-1960 ☐
   - 1961-1970 ☐
   - 1971-1980 ☐
   - 1981-1990 ☐
   - 1991-1999 ☐

6. Port of entry into Canada ______________________________

7. (a) Did you have any relatives in Canada when you arrived? Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) If yes, did you stay with them? Yes ☐ No ☐

8. How did you migrate to Canada? Please check one.
As a Refugee or on humanitarian grounds ☐
As a Student ☐
As a Business Immigrant ☐
As an Independent Immigrant ☐
Private Sponsorship ☐
5 Family Sponsorship ☐
Other (please specify) ________________ ☐

C. Language and Education

9. Which languages can you speak, write or read?

Spoken	Written	Read

10. How do you rate your comfort level with the English language, one being very uncomfortable and five being very comfortable?
Very comfortable ☐
Comfortable ☐
Somewhat comfortable ☐
Somewhat uncomfortable ☐
Very uncomfortable ☐

11. (a) Since your arrival in Canada, have you taken any language training courses?
Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) If yes, please indicate how satisfied you were with the language training courses you received from the following:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
MISA	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Locally sponsored group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Metro ESL Association	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Private tutor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11 (c) Please list the positive and negative aspects of your training:

Positives:

Negatives:

12. What level of education have you attained and from which country? Please check all applicable below:

Level of Education	*Certificate or Degree Obtained*	*Country Where You Studied*
High School, not completed		
High School, completed		
Vocational School/College		
University, not completed		
University, completed		

D. Information on Access to Credit Facilities:

13. (a) During your first three years after receiving landed immigrant status in Canada, did you ever apply for the following types of credit or service? Please circle all applicable:

- Personal Loans / Lines of Credit ☐
- Credit Cards, including Store Cards ☐
- Overdraft Protection ☐
- Mortgage ☐
- Student Loan ☐
- Business Loan / Grant ☐
- Bank Account ☐
- Not Applicable ☐

(b) Please indicate which of your credit applications were successful

- Personal Loans ☐
- Credit Cards, including Store ☐
- Cards Overdraft Protection ☐
- Mortgage ☐
- Student Loan ☐
- Business Loan ☐
- Bank Account ☐
- Not Applicable ☐

13 (c) Of the applications that were declined which of the following statements represent the reasons given for the decline:

No credit history ☐
Lack of suitable employment record ☐
Insufficient qualifying income ☐
Immigrant status ☐
Other (please specify) ______________________ ☐
Not Applicable ☐

(d) In your opinion, what do you think is the reason that your application was declined?

14. Could you describe any problems that you have experienced whilst dealing with thebanks or financial institutions.

15. Please give us your suggestions to improve the process of credit application for African Canadian Immigrants:

E. Social Programs Accessibility

Through the Immigration and Employment Department the government sponsors immigrant settlement programs and other social services to assist new immigrants in trying to integrate into Canadian society. Below is a list of questions by service category. Please indicate your knowledge of these programs, accessibility, quality of service delivery and general effectiveness.

Housing

16. Below is a list of different types of housing normally used by immigrants in Nova Scotia, please check the types of housing that you have used:

Public Housing ☐
Cooperative Housing ☐
Boarding Room ☐
Private Homes ☐
University Residence ☐
Hostels ☐
Rental Apartment ☐
Purchased Property ☐
Other (Please specify) _________________________ ☐

17. Please tell us how you learned about these housing options when you first came to Nova Scotia. Check all applicable.

MISA	☐
Friend	☐
Family	☐
Church/Temple/Mosque	☐
Government officer in your country of origin	☐
Newspaper	☐
Other students	☐
Other (please specify) ____________________	☐

18. If you used public housing, cooperative housing or any government-sponsored housing indicated in Question 16, please answer the following questions:

(a) How long were you on the waiting list? ____________________

(b) What type of unit did you get? ____________________

(c) How long was your lease agreement? ____________________

(d) Was your housing subsidized? ____________________

(e) If you transferred to another unit or location, how long was the waiting period

____

(f) Did you secure a loan through the cooperative housing schemes? If so could you describe your experiences with this process. ____________________

19. Did you face any problems or barriers in finding and renting housing in Nova Scotia? For example; lease agreement problems, personal/credit reference requirements, or any other … Please explain.

20. (a) Have you ever gone to the Tenancy Board? Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) If yes, did the Tenancy Board help you? Yes ☐ No ☐

(c) Please indicate the reasons why you went to the Tenancy Board:

General upkeep of the building	☐
Problems with the terms of the lease	☐
An increase in rent	☐
Problems with the neighbours	☐
Others (please explain)____________________	☐

21. If you have never been to the Tenancy Board what are some of the reasons why you have not used this service? Please check all applicable.

No knowledge of the Tenancy Board	☐
Payment of processing fee	☐
Transportation difficulties	☐
Lack of childcare	☐
Language difficulties	☐
No belief in the system	☐
Other (please specify) ____________________	☐
I had no reason to	☐

22. Did you ever face any problems while trying to buy your own property? Yes ☐ No ☐

23. If yes, could you describe your experiences with trying to purchase your own property in Nova Scotia.

24. Please give us your suggestions to improve access to housing services for African Immigrants.

Health

Many research reports have noted that immigrants and refugees often face cultural and language barriers in trying to access health care services.

25. (a) Has language been a barrier for you in receiving health care in the following ways? Please check all applicable.

Finding a doctor ☐
Communicating with receptionists, nurses and doctors ☐
Explaining your illness or that of a family member ☐
Understanding the doctor and the treatment given ☐
Understanding and awareness of a hospital system ☐
Other (please specify) ____________________ ☐
Not applicable ☐

(b) If yes, please indicate how you have dealt with this problem

26. Do you think that because of your cultural background the health care you received was not appropriate? (For example being told to watch out, "If your child's skin turns blue…") etc.

27. In the last year, what types of health care services have you and your family used?
    General practitioner ☐
    Hospital emergency ☐
    Walk in clinic ☐
    Counseling services ☐
    Rehabilitation/physiotherapy ☐
    Maternity ward ☐
    Other (please specify) ____________________________ ☐
    Not Applicable ☐

28. Could you list any problems you have encountered in getting good health care service.

29. The following are some suggestions to improve the delivery of health care service for African
    Canadian Immigrants, please check the statements you agree with:
    Need for Interpretation/Translation Services ☐
    Need to provide Orientation and Information sessions about the Canadian Health Care System ☐
    Need for a referral list of doctors experienced with the immigrant population ☐
    Need to have emergency procedures translated into diverse African languages ☐
    Need for greater representation of African Canadian Immigrants as health care providers ☐

30. Please add any other suggestions you may have.

Immigration Settlement Services

31. (a) Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) is a community organization that welcomes immigrants into Canada and helps them in settling and integrating into Canadian society. When you first arrived in Nova Scotia, did you use MISA or any of the following settlement agencies, please circle all applicable:
    Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) ☐
    Catholic Pastoral Centre ☐
    Other (please explain)____________________________ ☐
    Not applicable ☐

31. (b) If you have used any of the above settlement agencies, how useful were they in helping you to adjust and integrate, please explain:

32. If you have used any of the following services provided by MISA, please indicate how satisfied you were with each service:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Looking for housing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Medical appointment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child care	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Host family	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
English classes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Resume writing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job hunting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recreation programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Starting a business	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interpretation/translation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Schooling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (Please specify):					
______________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
______________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

33. If you never used the above services of MISA, did you use any of the following services and how useful were they to you?

	Very Useful	Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not very Useful	Not at all Useful
Catholic Pastoral Centre	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Church community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
African or Caribbean Associations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Canadian family	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
University and other educational institutions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Immigrant Women's Support Association	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (Please specify):					
______________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
______________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

34. During your first three years in Nova Scotia did you have any specific information needs that were not adequately addressed, if so, what were they and could you give us your suggestions on how this and other information should be conveyed to African Immigrants.

Community Services

35 (a) Are you a member of any African or Caribbean Association in Canada? Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) If yes, name of association: ____

(c) How important is this association in helping to adjust and integrate into Canadian society? Please explain:

36. Have you used any of the following community services?

Social Assistance/Welfare	Yes ☐	No ☐
Employment Insurance	Yes ☐	No ☐
ChildCare Subsidies	Yes ☐	No ☐
Family Benefits	Yes ☐	No ☐
English Language Training Courses	Yes ☐	No ☐

Other Training Programs (Please specify) ______________________________________

37. Of the services that you used please indicate how satisfied you were with the quality of their service.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Social Assistance/Welfare	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employment Insurance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child Care Subsidies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family Benefits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
English Language Training Courses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other Training (Please specify):					
______________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
______________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

38. If you ever applied for social assistance or welfare, did you face any problems in getting your application approved? If so, please describe the nature of these problems and give your suggestions for improvement:

39. Since you arrived in Canada have you used any of the following legal aid agencies?

Nova Scotia Society for Legal Aid	Yes ☐	No ☐
Dalhousie Legal Aid	Yes ☐	No ☐

Other (Please specify): ______________________________

40. Below is a list of some of the services normally offered by legal aid agencies. If you have used any of these services please indicate how satisfied you were with each one of them.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Lawyers to deal with Immigration problems	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Discrimination in the workplace and/or school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Legal representation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Divorce Issues/Child Custody	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Advice on tenancy matters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Advice on family benefits or social assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Notarization for official documents (i.e. Wills)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other Training (Please specify):					
________________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
________________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

41. Would you please tell us about any specific legal needs that you had and what your experiences were in looking for legal services,

42. Please add any other comments:

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire. Your answers are a valuable contribution to our search for better services for african canadian immigrants.

Appendix C

Letters to the African Immigrant Associations

April 7, 1999

Hello

We are writing to you on behalf of the African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project. This research project is reaching out to African Canadian Immigrants living in Nova Scotia. Perhaps you have recently received a letter from Dr. George Mbamalu. We are members of the same research team but are studying different issues.

We are interested in understanding and *changing* the delivery of services to African Canadian Immigrants. Our main areas of study are Housing, Health, Community services and Immigrant Settlement Agencies.

What are the barriers facing African Canadian Immigrants in these areas?

How can programs be redesigned to meet the specific needs of African Canadian Immigrants?

How can we use our experiences to encourage new policy development?

We are in the process of creating a database of African Canadian Immigrants in Nova Scotia. We plan to carry out interviews, focus groups and a province-wide survey. We hope that you will agree to cooperate, and be involved with this important work that will benefit all African immigrants.

Can we meet with you and discuss our research project in more detail?

Thank you for your time.

Winnie Mabaleka	Michelle Thomason
443-5351	454-6675

Appendix D

Letters of Invitation to Focus Groups

African and Caribbean Immigrants

Important Meeting

*****Babysitting & Light Refreshments Provided*****

These focus groups are part of the *African Canadian Immigrant Action Research Project*, created to understand and improve service delivery for you.

Please choose one time that works for you:

Saturday 10:00–12:00 OR 1:00–3:00 OR 3:30–5:30

Sunday 10:00–12:00 OR 1:00–3:00

These meetings will take place at the community "Y"

2269 Gottigen Street

Questions? Call Winnie Mabaleka 443-5351 or Michelle Thomason 454-6675

Thank You

Appendix E

Immigrants to Nova Scotia, 1980–1995

Region of Last Permanent Residence	1980	% of tot	1981	% of tot	1982	% of tot	1983	% of tot	1984	% of tot	1985	% of tot	1986
Africa	33	0.02	41	0.03	27	0.02	19	0.02	34	0.03	50	0.05	69
Europe	226	0.15	460	0.33	553	0.44	325	0.39	338	0.33	294	0.30	343
Asia	834	0.55	357	0.25	234	0.19	198	0.24	361	0.35	301	0.31	346
Australasia	6	0.00	10	0.01	14	0.01	5	0.01	9	0.01	5	0.01	11
North and Central America	361	0.24	463	0.33	358	0.29	250	0.30	261	0.25	290	0.30	274
Caribbean - Antilles	32	0.02	54	0.04	33	0.03	21	0.03	17	0.02	17	0.02	34
South America	10	0.01	18	0.01	35	0.03	11	0.01	13	0.01	16	0.02	20
Oceania and Other Ocean Islands	3	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	0.00	1	0.00	1	0.00	0
Africa and Caribbean	65	0.04	95	0.07	60	0.05	40	0.05	51	0.05	67	0.07	103
Grand Total	**1505**	**1.00**	**1403**	**1.00**	**1254**	**1.00**	**833**	**1.00**	**1034**	**1.00**	**974**	**1.00**	**1097**

Region of Last Permanent Residence	% of tot	1987	% of tot	1988	% of tot	1989	% of tot	1990	% of tot	1991	% of tot	1992	% of tot	1993	% of tot	1994	% of tot	1995
Africa	0.06	375	0.31	76	0.06	443	0.30	69	0.06	200	0.13	452	0.19	423	0.14	539	0.16	360
Europe	0.31	52	0.04	449	0.35	62	0.04	343	0.31	269	0.18	309	0.13	463	0.15	328	0.09	510
Asia	0.32	367	0.30	378	0.29	545	0.37	346	0.32	741	0.49	1245	0.53	1786	0.59	2399	0.69	2487
Australasia	0.01	19	0.02	12	0.01	14	0.01	11	0.01	7	0.00	20	0.01	24	0.01	11	0.00	8
North and Central America	0.25	352	0.29	337	0.26	362	0.25	274	0.25	246	0.16	273	0.12	273	0.09	140	0.04	148
Caribbean - Antilles	0.03	37	0.03	33	0.03	22	0.01	34	0.03	21	0.01	34	0.01	38	0.01	21	0.01	38
South America	0.02	22	0.02	10	0.01	16	0.01	20	0.02	19	0.01	21	0.01	11	0.00	29	0.01	32
Oceania and Other Ocean Islands	0.00	3	0.00	4	0.00	9	0.01	0	0.00	1	0.00	1	0.00	14	0.00	0	0.00	2
Africa and Caribbean	0.09	412	0.34	109	0.08	465	0.32	103	0.09	221	0.15	486	0.21	461	0.15	560	0.16	398
Grand Total	**1.00**	**1227**	**1.00**	**1299**	**1.00**	**1473**	**1.00**	**1097**	**1.00**	**1504**	**1.00**	**2355**	**1.00**	**3032**	**1.00**	**3467**	**1.00**	**3585**

Appendix F

Name of Associations

- Africa Society of Nova Scotia
- African and Canadian Association of Newfoundland
- African Students Association
- Association of Sierra Leoneans in Nova Scotia
- Black Educators Association
- Caribbean Association of Nova Scotia
- Ethiopian Community Association
- Ghanaian Association of Nova Scotia
- Ghanaian Friendship Society
- Immigrant Women Support Association
- Manitoba-Somali Association
- Nigerian Association of Nova Scotia
- PRUDE St. John's
- Southern African Association
- United African Canadian Women's Association
- Zimbabwe Students Association